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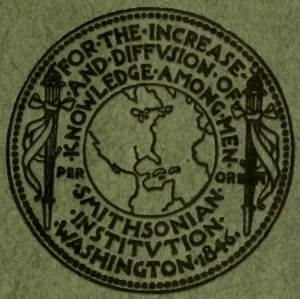
STONE MONUMENTS OF SOUTHERN MEXICO

By
MATTHEW W. STIRLING



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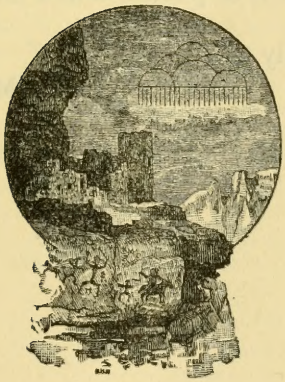


UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1943

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D. C. Price 35 cents

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

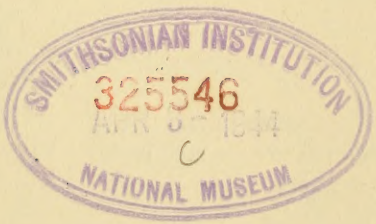
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,
Washington, D. C., March 1, 1943.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a manuscript entitled "Stone Monuments of Southern Mexico," by Matthew W. Stirling, and to recommend that it be published as a bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

Very respectfully yours,

M. W. STIRLING, *Chief.*

DR. C. G. ABBOT,
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.



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STONE MONUMENTS OF SOUTHERN MEXICO

By Matthew W. Stirling

INTRODUCTION

The practice of carving and erecting large stone monuments was one of the conspicuous achievements of the aborigines of tropical America, from northwestern South America to and including a considerable area of southern Mexico. In the south this practice was most common in Peru and Colombia. From this region northward, the distribution is more or less continuous. From the State of Oaxaca in Mexico the distribution is northward, and carries through the Valley of Mexico and most of the State of Veracruz, but does not follow up the Pacific slope much beyond the State of Oaxaca. The monument-carving custom reached its apex in the Maya area, where it was most frequently employed in connection with the use of the calendar system of that area. Although the art styles employed and the nature of the monuments differ considerably through this rather large region, it seems evident that a certain interrelationship exists, an understanding of which should cast considerable light on the chronologies and pre-Columbian cultural exchanges between the two continents, especially since the monument-distribution area involves most of the high-culture centers of the New World. The purpose of this paper is not to offer any solution of this broad problem, but to present some new and some little-known evidence concerning the region west of the Maya area which may contribute to chronological and distributional knowledge of the northern sector of the general monument region.

The material here presented represents one of the byproducts of four seasons of archeological field work conducted under the direction of the writer for the Smithsonian Institution and the National Geographic Society. This work in turn is part of a larger plan inaugurated in 1932 by the Bureau of American Ethnology for the purpose of studying cultural sequences in Middle America by attacking the archeological problems of the eastern and western margins of the Maya area, with the idea of determining relationships with the better-known pre-Columbian Maya. Work on the eastern margin was begun in 1933 under the direction of William Duncan Strong and terminated by him in 1936, the preliminary results of which have been published

(Strong, 1938). In 1938 the writer began his work with a preliminary survey of the western margin. In the winter of 1938–39 excavations were conducted at Tres Zapotes during a period of 4 months. The writer was assisted in the field by Dr. C. W. Weiant. The expedition was also accompanied by E. G. Cassedy, artist of the staff of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and by Richard Stewart, staff photographer of the National Geographic Society. Marion Stirling

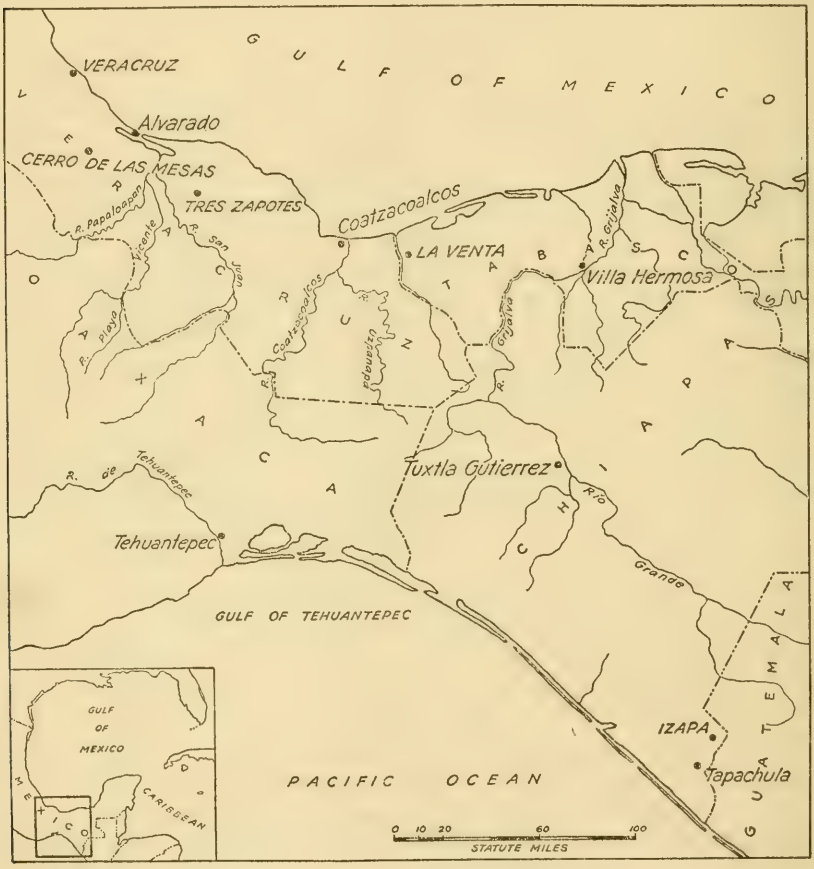

FIGURE 1.—General map of southern Mexico.

and Marian Weiant also accompanied the expedition and participated in the work (Stirling, 1939).

The excavations at Tres Zapotes were resumed during the season of 1939–40. Dr. Philip Drucker accompanied the writer as assistant archeologist, and was specifically concerned with the stratigraphic excavations. Mr. Stewart and Marion Stirling were again members of the party. During the progress of the work at Tres Zapotes, the site of La Venta in northern Tabasco was visited for the purpose of

excavating and photographing the stone monuments there. Ten days were spent at this task (Stirling, 1940 b).

The same party returned to the field for the season of 1940–41, when 4 months were spent excavating the site of Cerro de las Mesas in Veracruz. An additional trip was made to the State of Chiapas, where 7 days were occupied in excavating and photographing the stone monuments at Izapa, in the southern corner of that State (Stirling, 1941).

As a result of observations in the region west of the Maya area, it would seem that a stela cult flourished at a relatively early date, involving among other things the worship of a jaguar being and the use of a ceremonial calendar. Together with the erection of stelae is found the practice of setting up altars and colossal stone heads. In the case of the early monuments, the physical type represented is the so-called Olmec, or La Venta, with flat nose and heavy drooping mouth.

Stelae are frequently carved in the highly conventionalized form of a jaguar head with open mouth, in which various figures are represented in full relief or low relief. If one could assume an evolution of art style, it would seem that the more realistic representations of this form would be early and the more highly conventionalized, relatively later. Realistic forms would be represented by Stela D, Tres Zapotes; Stela 1, La Venta; and Monument 2, Izapa.

At Cerro de las Mesas, Tres Zapotes, Izapa, and La Venta, the "tiger mask" panel was utilized as a decorative motive on stelae, a feature which occurs also in Maya art.

The existence of carved stone stelae in Veracruz has been commented upon frequently by various writers. Perhaps the best known are two similar monuments from the vicinity of Huilocintla, representing Quetzalcoatl in the penetential rite of drawing a stick through his tongue (Seler, 1906). One of these is in the National Museum of Mexico. Another interesting stone, also in the National Museum, is the stela of Tepatlaxco, the relief on which shows a bearded standing figure, probably a ball player, being assisted with his gear by another person (Seler, 1906). Still another is the stela of Alvarado, a tall pillar of columnar basalt which has carved on it a standing figure before a kneeling bound captive. This stone has on one side what appears to be a badly eroded glyph column. The similarity of this monument to one at a mound site near El Meson is commented upon later. Also in the National Museum is the so-called stone of Chapultepec. This monument is of particular interest to the present account since its design practically duplicates that of Stela 5 at Cerro de las Mesas. This stone is supposed to have come not from the hill of Chapultepec in the Federal District, but from the village of Chapultepec south of Mexico City. It is highly improbable that

this could have been its place of origin, and it seems fairly safe to assign it on stylistic grounds to southern Veracruz. Dr. Spinden gave the verbal opinion to me that it probably came from Cerro de las Mesas.

The writer wishes to express his indebtedness to Richard Stewart, of the National Geographic Society, who is responsible for most of the photographs; to Edwin G. Cassedy, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, for the drawings of Tres Zapotes monuments; and to Miguel Covarrubias for the drawings of the monuments of Cerro de las Mesas. All of the drawings reproduced are from sketches made in the field. Mr. Covarrubias has not only contributed this valuable addition to the report, but the writer has profited greatly from his profound knowledge of the art and archeology of the early cultures of Mexico, in which field he is without question one of the outstanding authorities. Dr. Weiant is responsible for assembling the early historical data on the Tres Zapotes region, and Dr. Drucker for the geological and topographical material for the same area.

Most of all, acknowledgments are due to Dr. Alfonso Caso, Director of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia of Mexico, and to Arquitecto Ignacio Marquina, Director of the Departamento de Monumentos Prehispanicos. Not only in their official positions have they done everything possible to encourage and facilitate the work, but by giving freely of their personal knowledge of Mexican archeology have contributed many ideas which have added to the value of the report. The same might be said for all of the staff of the Instituto Nacional, whose cooperation has been a source of great personal pleasure to the writer; in particular, Eduardo Noguera and Juan Valenzuela have willingly given their time and advice.

A particular description of the four principal sites excavated by the expedition follows.

TRES ZAPOTES

The present village of Tres Zapotes is occupied by agriculturists who depend for their living upon an ejido apportioned to them out of the lands of the old Hacienda de Hueyapan, once the property of the Mimendi family and in earlier times part of an estate belonging to a nephew of Hernán Cortés. It is within the jurisdiction of the municipality of Santiago Tuxtla. Geographically, it lies about midway between the important towns of Tlacotalpan and San Andrés Tuxtla, in the southeastern part of the State of Veracruz. What for our purposes is more important is that it is also situated about midway between the Valley of Mexico to the northwest and Old Empire Maya cities to the southeast. It is most conveniently reached from Tlacotalpan, whence one can go by gasoline launch via

the San Juan River and connecting waterways as far as the Boca de San Miguel—a 5-hour trip, if one has luck—and thence another 2 hours by horseback. It lies within a day's journey by horseback from the Gulf Coast (pl. 1).

By modern standards the village may justly be termed isolated. There are people here who have never been to Tlacotalpan, and some who have made the trip but once or twice in their lives. Few have traveled farther afield than Catemaco, there to attend the annual Holy Week celebrations, and anyone who has visited Mexico City rates as a world traveler. So much outside the main current of Mexican life is Tres Zapotes that one still hears many of the forms and idioms of sixteenth-century Spanish in daily conversation.

These considerations, however, do not argue for similar isolation in pre-Cortesian times. That close ties with the Valley of Mexico had been established by the fifteenth century is a matter of history. Tlacotalpan and 21 other towns of the region were required to pay tribute to Montezuma in the form of fine cloths, women's garments, weapons and insignia, jewels of gold, ornaments of amber, cacao, precious stones and feathers, fine liquid amber, and "skins" made of rubber (Codex Mendoza, quoted by Paso y Troncoso, 1905). Moreover, Nahuatl had become the prevailing language. Coastal waters and tributary streams furnished easy access by small boats to territory to the north and the east. Toward the southeast jungles may have offered some obstacle to travel, especially during the long rainy season, although hardly to the extent that this is true today, if we are to judge by the number of archeological sites now enshrouded by the jungle. Mountain barriers to the southwest can hardly have been insurmountable, for even today mule-packs occasionally travel overland as far as Oaxaca, thus connecting with the routes once followed by Alvarado and Cortés on their excursions into Central America, routes which had long before been established by their aboriginal predecessors.

It is apparent, therefore, that the aboriginal inhabitants were quite favorably situated to influence and to be influenced by the successive waves of culture which flourished in pre-Conquest times in adjacent coastal areas, in Yucatan, on the great Mexican plateau, and in Central America.

Early data on this region are very meager. Bernal Díaz, in his account of the itinerary of Juan de Grijalva, notes that Alvarado entered the Papaloapan River and went as far upstream as the town of Tlacotalpan (Díaz del Castillo, 1928).

From the Relación de Tlacotalpan y Su Partido (Paso y Troncoso, 1905, t. 5) we learn that Tlacotalpan was considered a healthful place. Storms from the Gulf, "nortes," are reported as occurring from

August to February, although sometimes a month would elapse without one. Strong windstorms from the south, "sures," were also common. Fruits extensively cultivated included zapotes, chicozapotes, guayabas, and aguacates; while among the vegetables beans maize, squash, chiles, tomatoes, sweetpotatoes, and xicamas, a root tasting very much like the turnip, figured prominently. Floods were frequent, and they often destroyed the plantings of maize and sweetpotatoes. Among the fauna are mentioned deer, turkeys, aquatic birds, armadillos, lizards, and turtles. Fishing and the trading of fish constituted a major industry. All kinds of pottery were made ("loza de todas maneras"). A little salt was prepared from sea water, but it was of poor quality. Most of the salt used was imported by boat from Campeche. Sickness was treated with herbs. People lived in dwellings of palm and thatch of the same sort as those built today. Men wore their hair long, dressed in cotton and skins, and used loin cloths 2 yards long. They worshipped a female deity made of greenstone, which was taken once a year to the river and given a bath. At this time there was a human sacrifice with a ceremony attended only by the important personages of the town.

Of Tuxtla, the same source tells us that the people spoke a rude dialect of Mexicano (Nahuatl), employing certain sounds not heard in the vicinity of the Mexican capital; that they dressed in white cotton cloths, often decorated with painted designs, and wore loin cloths from which hung tassels; that they carried on war with Guazaqualco (Coatzcalco), using arrows, war clubs, flint knives, and shields made from the bark of strong cane; and that they put a kind of pepper which grew on a tree into their chocolate and their medicines. It is reported, further, that sexual intercourse was prohibited among them until they were "of much age," and that they were very healthy. They worshipped Uitzilopochtli, a god evidently imposed by the Aztecs. To this god slaves were sacrificed by priests who "did not know women." The variety of animals mentioned in connection with Tuxtla is greater than that given for Tlacotalpan; it includes wildcats, jaguars, coyotes, monkeys, squirrels, and rabbits. Parrots, also, get special mention. One custom is noteworthy, the heads of children were flattened by the mother or by the midwife who attended their birth.

In addition to the foregoing, we have, as further clues to the ethnic composition of the region, data generously supplied by Prof. Paul Kirchhoff and his colleague Arturo Monzón, of Mexico, D. F., taken from the Archivo General de la Nación (vol. 70). From two relaciones of the year 1600 bearing upon ecclesiastical matters in towns along the Río de Alvarado and in the vicinity of Tlacotalpan, it would appear that Mexicano was everywhere spoken. Of Cozumal-

hualpa it is stated, however, that both Mexicano and Mixtec were spoken, but that Mixtec was preferred. Again, of Mistlán it is stated that, although the people spoke Mexicano, they were of the Mixtec and Popoluca tribes. These references to the presence of Mixtec-speaking groups so far east are rather surprising and should be kept in mind for their possible bearing on the interpretation of material found at Tres Zapotes. There is nowhere any mention that Totonac was spoken in any of these towns, and this is in conformity with Krickeberg's map of Totonacapan (Krickeberg, 1933), which places the southern and eastern boundary of Totonac territory well to the west of Tres Zapotes, stopping at the Papaloapan River.

Despite the scant attention that it has received until recently, the site has been known to archeologists for nearly three-quarters of a century. As early as 1869, J. M. Melgar published an account of several excursions to a place neighboring San Andrés Tuxtla in which he referred to certain excavations of a cabeza colosal (Melgar, 1869). Two years later he released a study dealing with the antiquity and origin of the giant head in which he emphasized its "Ethiopian" features, features which have since been identified with the style of art called Olmec (Melgar, 1871). Thereafter, the Cabeza Colosal de Hueyapan (so named from the old Hacienda, though actually much closer to the village of Tres Zapotes than to the modern village of Hueyapan) had won a permanent place in the register of Mexican archeological monuments.

In 1892 an Exposición Histórico-Americana was held in Madrid. According to del Paso y Troncoso's catalog of the Mexican section, the Museo Nacional of Mexico, in preparation for this exposition, sent an expedition to Hueyapan, lasting 15 days, with the object of obtaining specimens. Precisely where and how these specimens were obtained is not recorded.

Early in the present century, the Selers traveled through the Tuxtla region, took photographs of the Cabeza Colosal and other stone monuments, and made a collection of pottery and figurines which they appear to have obtained largely by purchase. Their reports make no mention of the many mounds near Tres Zapotes (Seler-Sachs, 1922).

Probably the first to sense the genuine archeological importance of the locality was Albert Weyerstall (1932), whose observations did much to intensify the writer's interest in the site.

Early in 1938 the writer visited the site and determined to undertake excavations there. The National Geographic Society became interested in the project and agreed to finance it. In December 1938, a camp was established and the first of two seasons' work begun.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE SITE

The Tres Zapotes archeological site lies in the west-central portion of the district of Los Tuxtlas nearly at the foot of Tuxtla Mountain. Although within the coastal plain physiographic area,[1] the district in which the site lies, in fact most of the region, is a low upland (pl. 2, *b*). Instead of the flat plains crisscrossed with sloughs that border the Bay of Alvarado and flank the Papaloapan and lower San Juan Rivers, there are series after series of small but abrupt ridges and plateaus. These are the remnants of a heavily eroded peneplain of sedimentary origin.[2] Above tower the volcanic formations whose major peaks are Tuxtla and San Martín. Down the sides of the peaks race innumerable streams. As they flow through the gullies and narrow valleys that separate the sedimentary ridges, they retain their mountain-stream appearance, clear and brisk-flowing, quite unlike the sluggish muddy rivers of the lowlands into which they disembogue.

Despite the slight change in elevation, there appear to be but few floral differences between lowland and "upland." The fertile lowland, now for the most part cleared for cultivation, once supported a dense jungle growth (Kroeber, 1939, maps 2, 3, 5). Recently cut-over areas in the uplands have come back in low tangled second growth, but stands of tall virgin jungle remain here and there. The upland fauna, too, seems fairly typical of the coast plain in general, with deer, tapir, jaguar, and monkey formerly the common larger forms. The chief effect of the upland landscape, insofar as it affects human settlement, would seem to be that the amount of fertile land, the sort repaying primitive cultivation, is restricted. Consequently, the aboriginal population must have been concentrated in the favored localities. We may infer, too, that such places would probably be occupied for long periods, if the region was inhabited at all. A village could not straggle along indefinitely, following the new clearings as old milpas became exhausted. The natives would have to stay in the same place, or move clear out to another valley. Thus, given a sizable population, conditions seem favorable for the formation of deep archeological deposits. That there was a dense population in the region is attested by the many sites. Within a 10- or 12-mile radius of Tres Zapotes there are eight other known sites, most of which have mound groups whose construction obviously involved a great number of man-hours of labor.

The site of Tres Zapotes itself extends more than 2 miles along the floor and adjacent slopes of the narrow valley of the Arroyo Hueyapan above the modern village of Tres Zapotes (see fig. 2). The valley

[1] The climate is of the "Tropical" (as opposed to "Equatorial") type, with one wet season, June to December, and a dry season, January to May.

[2] According to Friedlander, this substructure is of Miocene origin (Friedlander and Sonder, 1924, p. 165).

plain, at its widest less than a mile across, is a nearly level alluvial formation through which the arroyo has cut a narrow steep-banked channel. The abrupt banks of its bed and absence of meanders give the stream a quite recent appearance. Flanking the plain on either side are the much eroded remnants of once extensive sandstone blocks whose tops rise perhaps 40 to 50 feet above the present plain. That

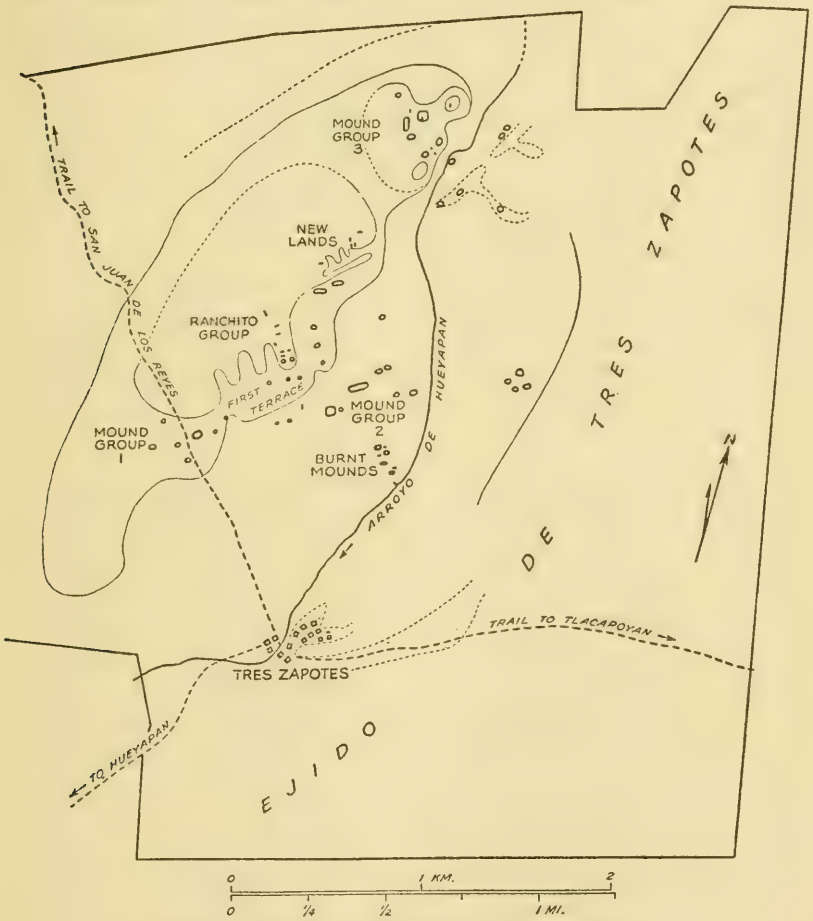

FIGURE 2.—Map of the Tres Zapotes archeological site.

on the west is in the form of a small plateau rising in two or, in some places, three terraces. It has a general northeastward trend, closing in on the arroyo at the upper end. There are two main tables: One a little less than a mile long and a half mile wide, with numerous spurs and ridges along its southeastern face; the other, a small irregularly shaped mesa at the northeastern end of the plateau. The sandstone of which the plateau is constructed outcrops at numerous points along

the edges of the terraces. At one place a little more than halfway to the upper end the sheer face of a ridge running out from the main body suggests faulting. Elsewhere, however, there are no sheer faces or abrupt angles. The worn rounded edges of the plateau, the shallow gullies that have cut back into its rim to leave a series of fingerlike ridges extending into the plain, point to erosion as the chief factor in modeling the present landscape. A thick layer of clay caps the sandstone. On the main body of the pleateau, the clay is a bright butter yellow with occasional streaks of fine angular red-brown gravel. This clay may be metamorphosed volcanic ash. The upper few inches of the clay are gray to black in color, apparently owing to the intrusion of humus materials. On the northeastern outlier of the plateau the soil is likewise clay but of a bright brick-red color. Whether the two clays are of different origin has not been determined. Adjacent ridges to the north also are covered with red clay.

It is along the southeastern slopes of this plateau, the plain at their foot, and on the northeastern outlier, that the greater part of the archeologic remains are found. There are a few mounds and occupational deposits on the east side of the arroyo, but not nearly so many as on the west. The eastern rim of the plain is formed by a system of spurs and ridges that swing through a wide arc from behind the village to a point nearly opposite the northeast end of the western plateau. At this point the arc is intersected by a series of bluffs with nearly vertical northwestern faces, whose tops dip steeply to the southeast. Their appearance suggests a fault line which must run diagonally across the valley, connecting with the previously mentioned block on the west side. Not far downstream from this supposed fault a basalt dike has been exposed in the arroyo bed. This is the only such formation in the vicinity. Whether it bears any relation to the fault formation is not known. To the south, just beyond the north end of Tres Zapotes village, there is a "laguna," really a basin that fills in the wet season. A U-shaped sandstone reef, covered with sherds and some traces of refuse, closes the southern end of the "lake."

Earth mounds, carved stone monuments, and refuse deposits compose the archeological remains at Tres Zapotes. The mounds are arranged in irregular groups for the most part, but there are also a fair number of small mounds which do not appear to be situated with reference to any group. It should be made clear at the outset that none of the assemblages of mounds that we designate as "groups" were laid out on a precise geometric plan. The units are straggled about at unequal distances, although in several cases they appear to have been meant to outline a rather lopsided court. There is no indication of attempts at orientation. One very definite mound-group pattern does appear, however, and is made significant by its recurrence at other sites in this region. This custom consisted in

building a relatively high steep mound, often circular but sometimes four-sided in plan, adjacent to a long narrow mound. Smaller mounds, usually rather low domes, were built as flankers, often in pairs, to complete the group.

The Tres Zapotes mounds are not large compared to the pyramids of the classic Maya area, but some of them are of moderate size. The two highest are in the neighborhood of 40 feet at their crests, and something over 150 feet along their baselines (both are square in plan). The most imposing of the long mounds is 425 feet long by 57 feet wide, and 25 feet high. At the other extreme are the small mounds barely 6 to 8 feet high and 40 to 50 feet across. None of the mounds were stone faced, nor are there remains of any major stone structures, aside from a few small areas flagged with slabs or blocks of sandstone, a small stone platform, and two small stairways found in the 1939 season which had sandstone-paved treads. It is interesting to note that in but one case is there anything resembling a borrow-pit near a mound. Such depressions might have been filled with alluvium, yet one would expect to see some traces of them even after a long period of time.

STONE MONUMENTS

The stone monuments of Tres Zapotes occur singly and are widely scattered over the large site. Most of them are carved from basalt, a rock which is abundant in the region, especially around the base of nearby Tuxtla Mountain. All of the monuments have suffered intentional mutilation in greater or less degree, suggesting the work of an invading people. Likewise, it is probable that many of them had been moved from their original locations. Exceptions are Stela A, which probably retains its approximate original location in front of a large mound, the Colossal Head which still stands on a crude foundation of rocks, and, of course, Monument E, the large numeral in the arroyo bed, carved from the living rock. Because of their condition and location and because of the art style employed, it is the writer's impression that most if not all of the larger monuments belong to the early middle period of occupation of the site. The stone columns which are found at various places on the site are possibly of later date. For the sake of convenient reference, all of the larger worked stones, with the exception of the stelae, have been classified as monuments regardless of their nature. These include human and animal figures, stone boxes, altars, basins, and the carvings found in the arroyo.

STELA A

This large and interesting monument was discovered lying on its back, at the southern base of Mound L, Group 2. Formerly it had

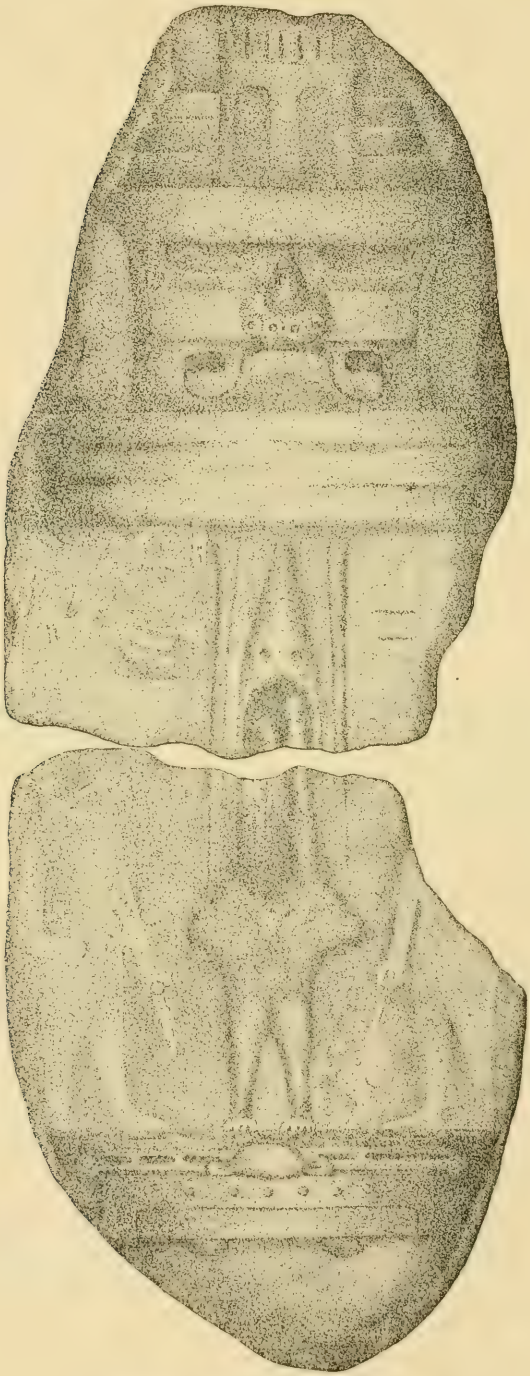

FIGURE 3.—Stela A. Tres Zapotes.

stood with the carved surface facing toward the west. It had fallen on its back, with the result that the decorated face was very badly eroded and mutilated (pl. 12 and fig. 3). In common with practically all of the monuments at Tres Zapotes, it had evidently been intentionally broken. A large section from the middle of the south side of the stela had been broken off and carried away. The upper portion is carved in the form of a giant mask panel, which is somewhat reminiscent of that on the face of Stela C and which is best described by reference to the illustration (fig. 3). Below this mask panel is a curving and projecting ledge, and at the lower portion of the monument is another similar projecting ledge. In the middle of the flat area lying between those two projections is carved a human figure in almost full relief. Unfortunately, it is badly mutilated and weathered. The head is missing, having been located at the position where the stela had broken in two. The smooth area on either side of this central figure had been covered with elaborate carving in low relief, most of which has now weathered to such an extent as to be indistinguishable. However, the central motives consist of a standing figure, on either side, facing toward the central figure. One of these figures is apparently holding a human head suspended, while the other grasps a small baton-like object. All three figures are standing on the lower ledge. The central figure is in full face, while the other two are shown in profile. The two sides of the monument were also formerly covered by carvings, the majority of which have been mutilated to such an extent as now to be unrecognizable. However, the figure of a crouching jaguar and portions of two reclining human figures are still quite well preserved (pl. 12, *b*). The back of the monument is perfectly smooth and scored here and there with longitudinal striations. During the course of excavation, it was discovered that thousands of obsidian flakes and prismatic blades had been packed all around the edges of the monument after it had fallen, particularly around the upper end, where probably 2 bushels were removed. Four figurine heads of early type were found at the foot, and also the solid effigy head of a king vulture. Although a large excavation was made around the base, no sign of a foundation was discovered. The dimensions of Stela A are as follows:

Length of lower fragment	8 feet 3 inches.
Length of upper fragment	9 feet 4 inches.
Depth of ledge on which the figures stand	1 foot 1 inch.
Width of stela at base of figures	6 feet 9 inches.
Thickness of base	3 feet 4 inches.
Thickness of flat surface	1 foot 6 inches.
Total length	17 feet 7 inches.

The material from which this stela is carved is different from any of the other monuments at Tres Zapotes, being a volcanic breccia.

STELA B

Lying about 25 yards southeast of the base of Mound C, Group 3, is a stela 5 feet long by approximately 3 feet in width (pl. 7, *b*). It consists of a slab of olivine basalt about 10 inches in thickness. This is the same material as Stela C. The base has been squared off and the top rounded by chipping away the edges of the stone. Both surfaces of the stela are smooth and flat. During the process of excavating this slab, it was discovered that the base had rested upon a foundation of unworked stones.

STELA C

This fragment is the most interesting monument at Tres Zapotes because it has carved upon it a bar and dot Initial Series date. It was the only monument at the site accompanied by an altar. It has been made the subject of a special paper by the writer (Stirling, 1940 a) and so will not be described here. The stela is now in the National Museum in Mexico City.

STELA D

About a mile and a half in a northeasterly direction from Group 1, lies Mound Group 4. This consists of five rather small mounds, grouped around a plaza. In the middle of this plaza lies Stela D. It is carved from basalt and is in a generally good state of preservation, although it has been mutilated at a few points. In its entirety the Stela represents the head and open mouth of a grotesque animal, probably a jaguar. On the flat surface, constituting the back of the mouth, are carved three human figures in low relief. The two right-hand figures are standing, each with the right foot slightly in advance of the left. On the left side, a third figure is kneeling, facing them. The central figure is shorter than the other two and is wearing a skirt, which hangs to the knees and is fastened by a sash around the waist. The figure standing on the right has the right elbow bent and is carrying a long staff in the right hand. The left arm hangs by the side, the hand holding a small decorated rectangular object with a circular handle. Armlets are worn on the upper arm and a broad necklace hangs over the neck. All three wear elaborate headdresses and behind each figure is a large circular object. The scene depicted is a peaceful one. The central figure appears to be a woman. Over these figures and under the projecting lip of the monster is shown what looks like a pot-bellied gnomelike figure, placed horizontally, facing downward, and carved in higher relief than the three human figures. The cheeks

of the animal are decorated with a series of curious conventional designs, both on the front and sides, and the front surface of the lower lip likewise has a somewhat mutilated conventional design (pl. 14 and fig. 4). The back of the monument is smooth and undecorated. The workmanship on this stela is of a high order. The figures

FIGURE 4.—Stela D. Tres Zapotes.

show an appreciation of perspective, are well modeled, and are free from stiffness. Together with Monument C and the Colossal Head, Stela D constitutes one of the most interesting art objects from Tres Zapotes. Weyerstall calls this Monument 4. The dimensions of Stela D are as follows:

	Inches
Height	58
Width	39
Thickness at middle	14
Height of open mouth	33
Projection of lower ledge	9

STELA E

On the east side of the arroyo, in a position about midway between Groups 2 and 3, a high narrow promontory abuts on the arroyo. On the flat area at the top of this promontory is a small mound. Lying near the western foot of this mound was a well-worked slab of basalt, constituting a portion of a Stela. It is possible that this fragment was the lower portion of the monument intended to be set in the ground, as it is broken off just at the point where the decorative carving on the stone began. On each side a portion of this carved surface remains (pl. 7, *c*). The slab is about 4 feet long by 2 feet wide, and is 10 inches in thickness.

MONUMENT A

The most striking single object at Tres Zapotes is the Colossal Head (pl. 4). This remarkable sculpture is one of the major art objects of the New World. It is carved from a block of gray basalt and is exceptional for the realism of its treatment. At first impression the features seem quite negroid in appearance, but in general the head may be considered to represent an unusually fine example of the broad-nosed, short-faced figures, evidently an early type, that are found over a considerable area in Middle America. The ears are conventional in treatment, in contrast to the face. The back of the head is flat and marked with a number of vertical striations which may indicate hair. A band is shown around the forehead and the figure appears to be wearing a close-fitting headdress. The objects projecting on either cheek apparently represent ear ornaments worn through the lobes of the ears.

There is an outcropping of basalt in the bed of the arroyo about a mile distant from Group 1. A large rectangular block has apparently been quarried out at this place, and it may have been from this that the head was carved. Otherwise it would appear that this great stone, weighing more than 10 tons, must have been moved a distance of approximately 10 miles from the vicinity of Lirios, where a number of

large blocks of basalt identical in appearance lie upon the surface of the ground.

Upon completing the excavation of the Colossal Head, it was discovered that it had been placed upon a foundation consisting of a layer of unworked stones at the ancient plaza level, indicating that the head had been buried by a process of accumulation of earth and not as a result of sinking. The head is placed in front of the south mound of Group 1, and faces north. The tip of the nose and the left eye have been mutilated. On the top of the head are some superficial cracks which were probably caused by repeated exposure to fires made in burning grass or clearing land for milpas.

The first mention of the Tres Zapotes site in print came about as a result of the discovery of this monument. Writing in January 1871, Melgar said:

> It was in 1862 when I made several trips in the region of San Andrés Tuxtla in the State of Veracruz in Mexico that I heard of a colossal head which had been unearthed a few years before in the following manner. About a league and a half from a sugar plantation (Hueyapan) on a shoulder of the San Martín Mountains, while making a clearing for a milpa, a workman told of having found projecting above the ground what seemed to be the bottom of a huge inverted iron kettle. He notified the owner of the plantation who ordered its excavation, when in place of a kettle the above-mentioned head was found. It remains inside the hole made in exposing it because being made, in my opinion, from granite and being two yards in height with the other proportions corresponding, although they attempted to move it, they found it impossible to do so. Thus the situation remained. The discovery was mentioned but nothing was done about it. As I have already mentioned, on one of my trips in search of antiquities I arrived at this same plantation and requested the owner to guide me to the head. We went to it and on seeing it I was amazed. As a work of art it is without exaggeration a magnificent sculpture as may be judged by the photograph which accompanies this.[3] But what amazed me most was the Ethiopian type which it represented. [Melgar, 1871.]

The remainder of Melgar's article consists of an attempt to prove the former existence of a Negro population in Middle America.

MONUMENT B

Two large stone boxes were unearthed during the course of excavations. One of these (Monument B) was found close to the arroyo on an artificially elevated area lying to the east of the Burnt Mounds (pl. 7, *a*). All four sides of the box had been broken in such a manner that none of the upper edge remained. The box had been carved from a massive block of basalt and had a very heavy bottom in proportion to the sides, which were of unequal thickness. Judging from the

[3] There is no photograph accompanying the article, but an engraving shows among other stone archeological specimens standing on a table, a miniature model of the Colossal Head which seems fairly accurately done.

manner in which the inner and outer surfaces were finished, the box had apparently been completed when broken. There is no decorative carving whatever on the portion which remains. The box is generally rectangular in shape, with slightly outward flaring sides. The outside corners are rounded, so as to give it somewhat of a "bathtub" shape. The inside bottom is rectangular and perfectly flat. The height cannot be determined but the other dimensions are as follows:

Bottom length, outside	4 feet 1 inch.
Bottom width, outside	2 feet 3 inches.
Bottom length, inside	3 feet 8 inches.
Bottom width, inside	23 inches.
Outside length (approximate)	5 feet.
Bottom thicknesss	16 inches.

One end is completely missing and one side almost so. None of the missing fragments were encountered.

MONUMENT C

The second stone box (Monument C) was found in Group 2, lying just south of Mound C. This box was seen by the Selers in 1908, and had become reburied, excepting for a few inches of the highest portions of one end and one side. Weyerstall refers to it as Monument 5. It is approximately the same size and shape as Monument B, but differs from it in that the entire outer surface, excepting for the bottom, is covered with elaborate, carved decorations in low relief. Like Monument B, it is made from a single block of basalt, and is broken so that the upper edges are all missing. One side is almost completely gone. The major portion of the other side and the two ends still remain, and the carvings which decorate them are in very good condition. These carvings make Monument C one of the most striking objects recovered at Tres Zapotes.

Side A.—The principal features of the carvings consist of a number of figures of men, or deities, apparently engaged in combat, amidst an elaborate series of scroll-like designs. The writer does not feel competent to attempt an interpretation of these carvings, but the scrolls along the bottom of the two long sides appear to represent water, and, from what remains of the principal side, it is possible that the upper edge was decorated with a corresponding sky-band, as the upper central feature displays a grotesque face, which may represent the sun, or a sky god. From the center of the conventionalized mouth projects a curling forked tongue and a 3-pointed figure, with each point terminating in a dot. From each side of the mouth there depends half of a broad bifurcated tongue, each end of which terminates in a figure which may represent an outward-facing plumed serpent head in profile, with four fangs curling from the fore part

of the mouth, and an elongated tongue depending from the back of the mouth. If these are correctly identified, the scrolls, which constitute a major portion of the design on all four sides of the box, may represent the coils of plumed serpents. Outside of each serpent head is an inverted human figure. These two figures face toward each other. Each wears an elaborate headdress. The first figure has on a helmet in the form of an animal head, from which projects a curious spade-shaped ornament. His left arm is flexed across the breast, holding in place a straight rod, which passes under a rectangular object which may be an ornament depending from the headdress. The right arm is upraised and the hand grasps the handle of a round-headed club or mace. The knees are flexed in a position indicating action. The other figure is shown in a similar posture, the lower portion of the legs being broken off. One arm is flexed across the breast, holding some unidentified object, while the other arm is upraised, the hand grasping the middle of a slender staff, which is pointed at each end. The facial features are somewhat coarser than those of the first figure. The headdress is less clearly defined, that portion of the box having been worn almost smooth. A curious concave ornament hangs from the headdress in the position of a pendant ear ornament (pls. 5, 17, *a*).

Side B.—The remaining portion of side B (pl. 17, *b*) shows that the design on this side must have been similar in composition to side A. In one corner can be clearly seen the facial profile and headdress of a man with upraised arm and hand, grasping a rod similar to that held by the second figure, side A. The "water" scroll along the bottom is intact and in the other corner can be seen a spade-shaped headdress ornament like that worn by the first figure, side A, and a hand grasping a rod or a club handle. The small portion remaining of this side is very well preserved.

Side C.—On this end of the box is carved a central figure kneeling within the arch of a large scroll. The left arm, slightly flexed, extends backward, the hand grasping a long spearlike object which points forward and upward. The right elbow is bent, the right hand resting on the upraised knee. This figure wears a headdress terminating in the same spade-shaped ornament shown on the first figure, side A. The face is looking upward, toward a figure in the upper left-hand corner of the design. This figure is shown from the waist up, the lower portion of the body being concealed by a large scroll. He is wearing a curious nose ornament and his gaze is directed downward at the first figure. The left arm is flexed across the breast, the right elbow bent, and forearm upraised. Both hands grasp a long spearlike object, the lower point of which apparently touches the right knee of the first figure. In the upper right-hand corner is shown the upper part of an-

other human figure, also with gaze directed downward at the first figure. The right arm is raised upward, as though lifting his animal headdress. Under his flexed left arm he holds a good-sized rectangular object. This figure appears to have a pointed beard and the ear is quite realistically depicted (pl. 18, *a*).

Side D.—This side is decorated with a large triple scroll similar to that on the opposite end of the box. Within the central loop is a figure in human form, grasping a slender staff. The face, in profile, is looking backward over the left shoulder. This face, the best preserved of the eight human faces which appear on the box, is strongly Mayoid in character and resembles the "Roman Nose" God so frequently depicted in Maya art. He is wearing an ornate headdress, which is surmounted by a bird head over the forehead. The wrists and forearms are decorated with bracelets. Apparently a necklace is shown on the chest, with a concave pendant object similar to that worn by the second figure, side A. In the upper left-hand corner is shown the upper portion of another figure, with one arm upraised, the other reaching forward, the hand touching the point of the staff carried by the first figure. In front of this figure is a large rectangular object, possibly a shield, grasped by the left hand. The portion of the box on which the features of this personage were carved has been worn quite smooth, but the outline of the profile is still fairly clear, showing either a projecting chin or a beard. The upper right-hand corner of this end of the box is missing. It is probable that this contained a third figure, analogous to those shown on the three remaining end corners. (Pl. 18, *b*.)

In its entirety, this box constitutes a magnificent art object. The complex design is beautifully balanced and, although very intricate, it is executed with fine taste and feeling. The scrolls are modified just enough from geometric exactness to produce a sweeping graceful effect. The position of the figures is easy and graceful. The composition indicates deep imagination and symbolic thought. As an object of art, it is thoroughly sophisticated, and represents the work of a master craftsman. The dimensions of the box are as follows:

Bottom length, outside	4 feet.
Bottom length, inside	3 feet 3 inches.
Maximum top length, outside	5 feet.
Bottom width, inside	2 feet 2 inches.
Top width, outside (approximate)	3 feet 2 inches.
Bottom thickness	12 inches.
Thickness of sides	6 inches to 8 inches.

The ends are somewhat thicker than the sides.

It is impossible to estimate exactly the height of the box, because no portion of the upper edge remains. At present the greatest remaining outside height is 29 inches.

This monument is now in the National Museum in Mexico.

MONUMENT D

About 10 feet south of Monument B was excavated a barrel-shaped stone, 2 feet 10 inches in height, carved from basalt. The bottom is flat and the top contains a circular basinlike depression about 3 inches deep, with a rim 3½ inches wide. Most of the rim had been battered off, but about 12 inches of the top surface is intact. It is possible that this stone served as a receptacle for offerings but it seems more likely that it was a sacrificial stone, as it would be of the correct dimensions for this purpose, and the basinlike bowl on the top would serve for collecting blood. Since the analogous carved stone boxes of the Mexican Plateau area were known to have been for the purpose of storing sacrificial blood, the existence of this stone in definite relationship to one of these boxes lends support to the idea that the Tres Zapotes stone boxes also were intended for this purpose (pl. 10, *b*).

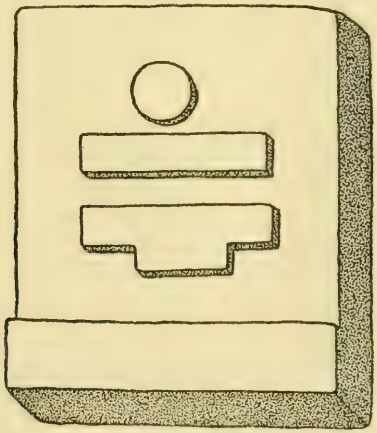

FIGURE 5.—Monument E. Numerical inscription carved on base rock on the bed of the arroyo. Tres Zapotes.

MONUMENT E

Just east of the Burnt Mounds the arroyo cuts through a massive rock formation. Carved from the living stone on the bed of the arroyo, and 3 to 4 feet under the surface of the stream at low water, is a rectangular slab, approximately 6 feet long and 5 feet wide, that projects 10 inches above the bedrock. On this is carved in relief, 2½ inches high, a dot and two bars, as shown in figure 5.

This interesting numerical inscription apparently was carved at a time when the bed of the arroyo was in another position. Its location seems to equate it without much doubt to the deeply buried habitation level covered with a layer of consolidated volcanic ash. Trench 26, where the principal stratigraphic excavation was made penetrating this early level, was almost directly opposite this carving. The physical evidence connecting the numeral with this earliest ceramic horizon has been discussed in some detail by Drucker in his report on Tres Zapotes ceramics (Drucker, Bull. 140, in press). This is an important point because it demonstrates the use of bar and dot numerals at the site during its earliest period of occupancy. This increases the probability that Stela C likewise belongs to this period, and makes the contemporaneity of its late Baktun 7 date more probable.

MONUMENT F

This is one of two large grotesque figures in the form of a head with shoulders and flexed arms, and with a long flat tenonlike projection instead of a body. It is possible that these stones may have constituted decorative details at an entrance or the base of a stairway, being anchored by means of the tenons. However, the latter are smooth and well finished, and it seems more likely that they were utilized as seats or altars. Monument F has a depression on the top of the head, which may have served to receive offerings (pl. 8, *a*).

This striking and powerfully modeled stone formerly lay in the flat area west of Mound M, Group 2, about 50 yards from the mound. In 1937 the natives of Tres Zapotes decided to move the stone to the village. By means of a large number of oxen they dragged it across the arroyo, but were unable to ascend the steep south bank. It was abandoned on the bed of the arroyo where it now reposes, covered by water in the wet season. This figure was seen by Weyerstall before its removal and was illustrated by him. He refers to it as Monument 2. The stone is 8 feet 3 inches long and 3 feet 1 inch wide at the shoulders.

MONUMENT G

This monument, belonging to the same class as Monument F, was found lying on its side between Mounds B and C of Group 2. It was partly up the west slope of Mound B but near the base, a position which indicated that formerly it may have been placed on top of this small mound. The features are so badly defaced that the face cannot be reconstructed. This is referred to by Weyerstall as Monument 3. It is 6 feet 11 inches long, 3 feet 3 inches wide at the shoulders, and 3 feet 10 inches high at the head (pl. 8, *b*).

MONUMENT H

Near the base of the southernmost mound of the Burnt Mounds Group was found the image of an owl, carved in gray basalt. This figure resembles in technique the so-called Olmec or "baby-face" figurines found in Veracruz and other parts of Mexico. The eyes are oval in shape and slant upward from the base of the beak. The ears are indicated in a long, narrow, rectangular fashion. The front of the body consists of a double concavity, while the back of the image is flat. The lower portion, which may have included the feet, has been broken away. The remaining portion of the stone is 29 inches in height and 17 inches in width (pl. 10, *c*).

MONUMENTS I, J, AND K

The lower portions of two seated figures, carved in basalt, were found. These bear a striking resemblance to the torsos of certain solid pottery figurines from the excavations. One of these, Monument I, lay in a cornfield near the base of a mound about 400 yards west of Group 3. This had been broken into two pieces, which fitted together perfectly. It evidently represented a male figure wearing a breechcloth. On the side of each thigh is a small raised carving, which appears to have represented the ends of a headdress hanging down the side. The back of the stone is hollowed out in the form of a circular basinlike depression (pl. 9, *a*, *b*).

In excavating a small low mound in the great plaza just to the west of Mound A, Group 1, at a depth of about 4 feet another somewhat similar figure, Monument J, was unearthed. This, however, appeared to have been flat on the back, and the lap constituted a basinlike depression. The arms extended straight forward, the hands resting on the knees. The crossed legs of the figure were not actually indicated, as in that previously described. This image had been painted red, and considerable sections of the red paint still adhered to the stone when it was discovered. The fragment measures 16 inches in height, 16 inches from front to back, and 18½ inches across (pl. 9, *c*).

On the surface of this same low mound was found another fragment, Monument K, consisting of the head and shoulders of a stone figure. Although the shoulders and the back are well modeled, no features whatever are indicated on the head. Whether or not this represents an unfinished carving, or whether it was intentionally made in this form, it is impossible to say. The entire bust measures 17 inches in height and 17 inches in width. The head is 8 inches in width and 14 inches high. The projection of the lower part of the face is about 5 inches (pl. 9, *c*).

MONUMENT L

Near the top of one of the mounds in the Burnt Mounds Group, one of the workmen noticed a projecting piece of stone, which upon excavation turned out to be the representation of a dwarflike pot-bellied human figure with bent elbows and hands placed over the stomach. The surface of the stone is considerably eroded but the general outlines of the figure are pretty much unaltered. The back is somewhat flat, and it stands upon a circular base, which is also flat. The material is gray basalt. The image is 26 inches in height, 13 inches across the flat portion of the back, and the head is 11 inches in diameter (pl. 11, *a*).

MONUMENTS M AND N

A little more than a half mile above Group 3 on the west bank of the Arroyo Hueyapan is a good-sized mound about 40 yards from the arroyo bank. On the level ground between this mound and the arroyo were two stone objects. Monument M is a seated figure, somewhat reminiscent in style of that from La Venta which is now in the town of Villa Hermosa (Blom, 1926, figs. 79, 80). The features, although somewhat eroded, are of modified "baby-face" style. The head is rather long and flat. It is about 4 feet high. The arms and legs were broken off, presumably in ancient times. During the interval between our two seasons of work at Tres Zapotes, one of the natives dragged it by means of oxen to the edge of the village, where the head broke off and where the figure now lies (pl. 11, *b–d*).

The second monument from this location, Monument N (pl. 10, *a*) is a cylindrical stone basin or offertory, 19 inches high, 22 inches in diameter, with a basin 4 inches deep and 13 inches in diameter. The bottom is smooth and slightly concave. This stone basin is quite similar to Monument D, although it is smaller.

MONUMENTS O AND P

At a point almost half a mile northeast of the Long Mound, the arroyo cuts through a mass of basalt in the bottom of the gorge. The water has carved a narrow trough through the solid stone at this point, about 8 or 10 feet deep. On the top of the east bank of the arroyo here, is a small mound which has been partially cross-sectioned by the arroyo. Below the mound and lying on the bottom of the stone trough are several large stones, including two peculiar carved objects, just alike excepting for their size (fig. 6). At the lowest water, they are about 5 or 6 feet below the surface of the swift-running stream, and it is necessary to dive under in order to examine them carefully. They are U-shaped pieces of basalt, but with arms of unequal length. The lower

part of the curve is filled with a stone "web," and to the longer arm, as part of the monolithic carving, is attached a short cylindrical piece. One of these stones is about 5 feet in length from the base of the curve to the tip of the longest arm; the other is about a foot shorter.

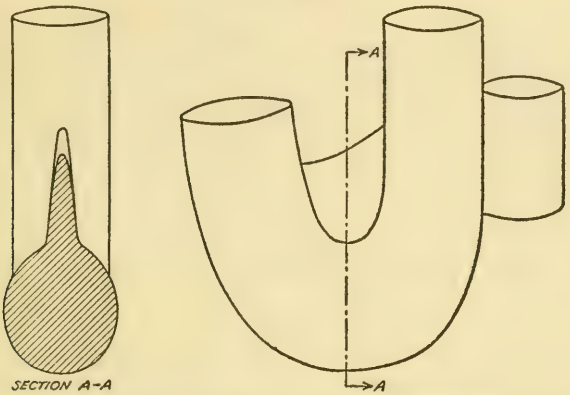

FIGURE 6.—Monument O. One of two similar stone carvings on the bed of the arroyo. Tres Zapotes.

ROUND COLUMNS

At various points throughout the archeological zone, cylindrical columns and column fragments were found. In two places these were in situ. Mound E, Group 3, has on its southern front two rows of very large boulders, which lead from the base to the top. Each of these rows terminates with a column on the exact summit of the mound.

On the southern side of Mound D, Group 3, were three round columns, two of which are still standing in a vertical position. Some of these columns are crudely finished but in a few instances they are well worked. None of them are ornamented in any manner by decorative carvings. Most of them appear to have been made from columnar basalt (pl. 15, *c*).

STONE PLATFORM

Excavation of a small mound lying just east of the Long Mound revealed that it covered a rectangular platform made of earth and faced with stone masonry. This platform measured 24 feet in length by 18 feet in width, and was 3 feet 10 inches in height. On the west side of the platform an abutment was constructed, up which a flight of four steps led to the top of the platform. These stairs, constructed of flat slabs of sandstone, were 6 feet in width and about 8 inches in depth. They were constructed in such a manner that each slab overlapped the succeeding one, covering half of the step below, thus making a very firm, locked stairway. In laying the sandstone slabs with which the

platform was faced on all four sides, the ancient masons were apparently careful to break the joints so as to strengthen the wall. No lime was used to bind the stones (pl. 13, *b*).

STONE STAIRWAY

In completing a cross section of Mound A, Group 1, a stairway consisting of five steps, composed of flat sandstone flagstones set in clay, was encountered. These five steps are curved so as to form part of the segment of a circle, and lead to the top of a primary mound which was constructed of heavy red clay and was flat on top. Each step is about 30 feet in length. The construction of this stairway is much more primitive in nature than that on the platform above described. In this case no true masonry is employed and the stones do not overlap (pl. 15, *a*).

STONE FIRE PIT

In almost the center of Mound F on the Ranchito terrace was a large circular fireplace, walled in by stones set up on edge so as to make an enclosure 5 feet in diameter and 2 feet deep. It was almost filled with burned earth, sherds, figurine fragments, and pieces of broken manos and metates (pl. 15, *d*).

LA PUENTE

About 1 hour's ride north of Hueyapan is a mound group at a place known as La Puente on the Hacienda San Pedro de Aguirrez. It is located on a small stream called Arroyo la Puente. The group consists of a large double mound about 50 feet high, with two smaller long mounds flanking it to the west. At a somewhat greater distance to the west is a high pyramidal mound. In the middle of the little court formed by the flanker mounds is a stone monument. When we found this it was almost completely buried. On excavation it proved to be a piece of basalt carved in the form of an arm, with bent elbow and closed fist (pl. 13, *a*.) There is an ornament around the wrist and another around the upper arm. It is not a fragment but was made complete in this form. One side is well finished, the other rounded off and smooth, showing that the stone was intended to lie flat. It is 44 inches long, 31 inches wide, and the diameter of the arm at the shoulder is 16 inches.

TLAPACOYA

From the nearby village of Tlapacoya Arriba, at the foot of Tuxtla Mountain, came one day a native carrying on his saddle the not inconsiderable burden of a stone jaguar. The head and forequarters are quite well carved, but the hind quarters taper off into a postlike pro-

jection, as though the figure were to be set up vertically in the ground (pl. 15, *b*.) This is the only stone carving we heard of in this vicinity.

SAN MARCOS

Near the small town of San Marcos, which lies about 4 hours' ride in a southeasterly direction from Tres Zapotes, we conducted excavations for about a week. At this site there are only a few very small mounds and some small but rich sherd deposits. In the course of excavations, a crude head of basalt (pl. 16, *c*) was encountered. This head differs considerably in appearance from any other sculpture we have seen in the region.

THE ARROYO SAN JUAN AND THE RÍO TECOLAPAN

On March 24 (1939) we left on horseback for an exploratory trip through the region lying between Tres Zapotes and Alvarado. We rode first to La Providencia, near San Juan de los Reyes. Here there is a group of mounds near the Arroyo San Juan. They are on the south bank of the stream, about 400 yards from the arroyo. The group consists of a steep, conical mound and, very close to this, in a northwesterly direction, a larger, lower, flat-topped mound. These mounds are about 25 feet and 20 feet in height, respectively. Close by, in an easterly direction, are two other low and rather formless mounds. Our guide said that 3 years ago a considerable number of hollow figurines, averaging about 10 inches in height, were found at the northwest base of the steep mound on the side facing the flat-topped mound. About a mile and a half south of this group, and lying east of the trail between San Pablo and La Providencia, can be seen another long mound. From La Providencia we rode down the Arroyo San Juan to Suchapa, where there are some small mounds, and where we saw a hollow head from a frog figurine. We left our horses at Suchapa and took a canoe down the San Juan to Macuile, where the San Juan enters the San Augustine River. Here we took a launch headed in the direction of Salto Barranca. About a mile below Macuile, on the west bank of the river, lies a group of mounds, two of which are quite large. One mound is cross-sectioned by the river, but the bank was largely overgrown. At El Paso a railroad bridge for a narrow-gage sugar line crosses the river. Here we disembarked and walked up the tracks to Salto Barranca, where we spent the night. The next morning we rode 2 miles southeast of town, where there is a group of 25 or 30 mounds, several being very large. These are on the north bank of the Río Tecolapan, the largest tributary from the Tuxtla Mountains north of the Río Tuxtla. At the south foot of the largest mound is a large fragment of columnar basalt. The story is told

that it was broken from the top of a long stela 40 years ago, which stood mostly buried near the top of the mound. At that time it was said to have been excavated and the lower part carved with figures. Before the bottom of the pillar was reached, the excavation caved in and the lower part was reburied. One old man is said to know the exact location. I am inclined to doubt that any stone monument was ever placed on top of a mound in this area.

Riding up the river a mile or two, we came to another less impressive mound group on the south bank of the Río Tecolapan. Here, all the natives agree, three worked stones had been visible in the flat but they became covered 50 years ago as a result of the silt deposited by occasional inundations. One old man is said to know just where they are buried, but he was in Lerdo when we visited the place. He lives on the site at present. The woman living there said she remembered the excavation of the column at the other site and the fact that the stone had decorations. Many figurines were described to us as found at these two sites, one life-sized head having been found less than a year ago at the south bank site. All of them had been broken by children and lost. We visited the place on the river bank where this head had been exposed by the river. The river was abnormally full for this time of year, but a heavy layer of pottery was visible at the water level about 8 feet under the surface. Among the sherds were fragments of the upright incensarios of the type which occur so abundantly at Lirios. Returning to Salto Barranca, we saw one large hollow head of modified "Totonac" type, also similar to some seen from Lirios. From Salto Barranca, we rode to Lerdo, which is built on a group of mounds, and continued to San Francisco, which joins Lerdo, and where there are more mounds. Here we learned that a year or so ago a stone figure, about 3 feet high with an elaborate headdress, had been dug up. One of the Sugar Mill officials was said to have sent it to Mexico. From San Francisco we took a bus over a rough road to El Meson. About 4 or 5 miles northwest of Meson is a very large and important group of mounds called Cerro de Gallo. These mounds are now mostly under cultivation for sugarcane and stand out very distinctly. They continue all the way to Meson and are the most impressive group we have seen. They can also be said to be on the north bank of the Tecolapan but not very close to the river. We spent the night at Meson. The next morning we were driven in a truck to another group of mounds about a mile further up the river on the north bank also. Here in a little court lies a very interesting fallen monument. It is a single piece of columnar basalt 12 feet long and 2 feet in diameter at the base. It tapers slightly toward the upper end. About 2 feet from the base, a deep groove goes all around the column. Above this groove is carved a well-preserved figure or glyph which goes across one flat

surface of the column and laps over slightly on the two adjoining surfaces. Above this is carved a narrow band and on this is carved in low relief the standing figure of a man, slightly less than life-size. The head is in profile, the shoulders shown full on, the right foot in advance of the left. The arms hang by the two sides. The figure wears an ear plug and headdress. The design probably continues on the adjoining facet, toward which the figure is facing (pl. 16, *a*). This column is closely similar to one in the hall of monuments in the National Museum in Mexico said to have come from near Alvarado. The stela near Salto Barranca was undoubtedly also of this type and may even be the same one now in the Museum. Three other stone fragments, apparently unworked, lie near this column, and there is said to be also a round stone with a circle carved on it, but our guide could not find this in the heavy grass. We heard that beyond La Florida, further up the river, a man has a stone figure about 3 feet high, and that there is a stone with "letters" on the upper trail between Meson and San Juan.

We left on horseback for Tres Zapotes. About a half hour's ride on the trail to San Juan, we crossed the Arroyo de la Sierra, and on the south side of this stream, at a place called La Sierra, saw an interesting mound group with at least one very high steep mound newly cleared for a milpa. Most of the group is under heavy forest. Between this point and San Juan the trail passes two or three other small mound groups. Hearing of a stone with "letters" on it, we rode from San Juan up the arroyo to Saltillo, where there is a very pretty waterfall, which drops over the edge of an old lava flow. Here I bought from an old woman a rather ornate small upright Red ware incensario and a headless "toad god" whistle of San Marcos type. There are several mounds to be seen near the trail between San Juan and Saltillo, all rather small. Just across the arroyo from San Juan is a small group on the right bank.

About a mile and a half beyond Saltillo is a small hill on a natural ridge. Near the top of this was the inscribed stone. It turned out to be a natural basalt boulder, roughly spherical in shape, and about 4 feet in diameter. On it were carved some crude scroll designs (pl. 16, *b*). There appear to be more underneath, as the rock has rolled over. Years ago, according to a native who joined us, someone excavated on the south side of the hill by the rock and found a number of small figurines. There are several other boulders on the hill and some large ones at the foot. All of these are unworked and the natives say this one stone is the only worked one in the region. Beyond this, about a half hour's ride, we went to see a fine crater lake about one-half mile in diameter. It is called Laguna Colorado, because on some days it is said to look red in color. It was green when we saw it under a good

sun. It has no outlet and is said to contain many crocodiles and fish of one species. It is said to be very deep. There are traces of aboriginal occupancy all through the foothills, as we frequently saw sherds on the ground, but no indication of large sites.

Near the edge of the town of Lirios is a large basalt boulder with petroglyphs (fig. 7), and on a high ridge about 2 miles from the town is a boulder with the figure of a jaguar (pl. 16, *d*).

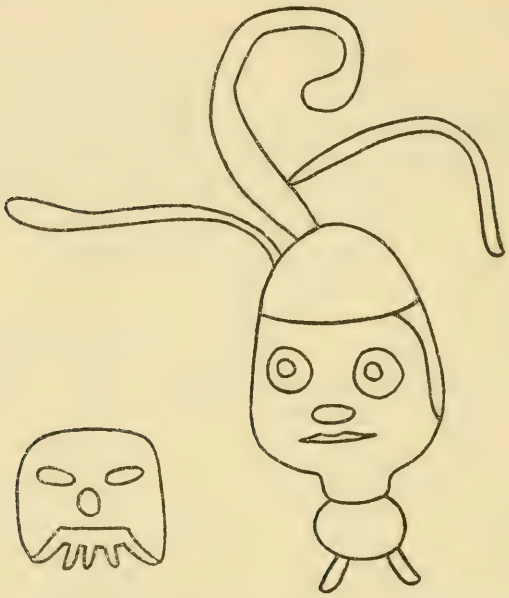

FIGURE 7.—Petroglyphs on a large boulder near Lirios.

It is evident that the entire area between the San Augustine River and the base of the mountains was heavily populated in aboriginal times, the settlements centering mainly on the arroyos flowing from the mountains to the river. In almost any spot that one crosses an arroyo, the bottom will be seen to be littered with sherds. From our brief survey it would appear that El Meson was a very important center in aboriginal times.

CONCLUSION

It is unfortunate that it is impossible to relate the stone monuments of Tres Zapotes and vicinity in a satisfactory manner to the ceramic cultural column so clearly established at the site (Drucker, Bull. 140, in press).

However, in at least three instances there is some evidence bearing on this relationship. Stela A, although fallen and considerably damaged, is probably in its original position. Excavations around it indicate that it had been set up on an artificial clay platform and

had fallen on its back. All of the ceramic materials recovered from the original base level of the stela belong to the late lower or early middle Tres Zapotes horizons. Monument A, the Colossal Head, is also probably in its original position. The ceramics in the ground immediately surrounding the head are not significant owing to the fact that the head had been excavated previously. However, if we may relate the head to the mounds of Group 1 surrounding the quadrangle in which it stands, we again find the early ceramic horizon represented. From the cross-section trench through the east mound of Group 1 were recovered only solid figurines of lower Tres Zapotes type and early pottery including quantities of Incised Black ware.

The relationship of Monument N to the earliest Tres Zapotes horizon has already been discussed.

The limited archeologic evidence all points toward a relatively early period for the larger stone monument. It appears likely that all of the major stones were carved before the beginning of upper Tres Zapotes and probably belong to the Lower and Lower Middle periods.

CERRO DE LAS MESAS

The site of Cerro de las Mesas lies near the south bank of the Río Blanco, some 15 miles east of the Bay of Alvarado. The Río Blanco, with its sources in the snows of Citlaltepetl, flows in an easterly direction into the Bay of Alvarado. During the dry season from December to May it is for the most part a stream of clear water too swift and too shallow to be navigable excepting in its extreme lower reaches. During the remainder of the year it is a muddy torrent, which inundates much of the bottom land bordering it. The archeological site is situated on an "island" of relatively high land apparently of aeolian origin, which from earliest times has been known as "the Mixtequilla," suggesting a former Mixtec occupation. On this "high" ground are numerous mound groups, of which at least five, Los Pajaros, Santana, Cerro de Gallo, Coyol, and Cerro de las Mesas may be considered of major importance. These groups cover an area about 15 miles in length from east to west. The spaces between the principal groups are dotted with lesser mounds to such an extent that it is practically impossible to tell where one group ends and another begins. None of the mound groups are systematically arranged, although rough quadrangles are usual, with flanking long mounds, as at Tres Zapotes and La Venta and various other sites in the general southern Veracruz region. Another feature of the Mixtequilla groups is the building of mounds on large rectangular platform bases. The highest mound in this region is that of Cerro de Gallo, which, with its platform base, must reach an elevation of

about 100 feet. This may be exceeded in volume, however, by the principal long mound at Cerro de las Mesas. The Cerro de las Mesas group, which is located approximately in the middle of the area, is, however, the most impressive and was probably the ceremonial center for the region. Excepting for a single crude stela at Cerro de Gallo, it possesses the only stone monuments in the Mixtequilla. The two mounds forming the north corners of the monument area are each pyramidal in shape and approximately 80 feet in height. The two southern mounds forming the other corners of this quadrangle are smaller in size. Between them lies a fifth mound, elongated in shape. Between this mound and the southwestern corner mound lies Plaza 2, containing the majority of the stone monuments. South of this is Plaza 1, and just beyond is the laguna, which may be a huge borrow pit. West of the principal quadrangle is the big long mound, which parallels the quadrangle, forming Plaza 4, the largest of the four central squares.

The site is most easily reached from the little town of Piedras Negras on the Veracruz-Tehuantepec Railway. From here it is about 12 miles by car along the road to Ignacio Llave. This road is passable only during the dry season and then only part of the time.

During the early 1920's there was considerable oil prospecting in the Mixtequilla, and a camp was set up at Cerro de Gallo, since renamed "Numero Uno" for the reason that a prospect well was sunk at this place. The oil men were attracted by the monuments at nearby Cerro de las Mesas and, according to the natives, many of the stones were moved by them in search of treasure.

Curiously enough, there does not seem to be any early publication on the site, in spite of its accessibility. In 1899 Strebel published pictures of a number of figurines, mostly of the "laughing face" type from Cerro de las Mesas. If these actually came from Cerro de las Mesas, they must have come from a cache, as this type of figurine is quite rare and not at all typical of the site. However, they do occur abundantly at the nearby sites of Joaquin, Cerro de Gallo, and Cocuite.

In 1921, E. R. Dunn and Prescott Townsend visited the Mixtequilla and photographed some of the monuments. These pictures were first called to the writer's attention by Francis Richardson. In 1924, D. McH. Forbes, of Portero Viejo, Veracruz, visited the site and later showed the writer photographs which he had made of some of the monuments.

In 1927, Dr. Herbert Spinden visited Cerro de las Mesas and, apart from Strebel's brief early mention, published the only account of the site which has appeared. This article in the New York Times contained drawings of Stelae 4 and 6 and descriptions of several of

the other monuments. Dr. Spinden identified a number of the figures as representations of the god Quetzalcoatl and pointed out the frequent use of the Venus symbol on the carvings (Spinden, 1927).

STELA 1

This monument, in the middle of Plaza 1, is one of the two stelae in the plaza. When discovered, but a few inches of the top were visible. The stone is well dressed and shaped, but the only decoration on it is the rudimentary representation of a nose and eyebrows on the upper part, facing toward the south.

On the lower part of the back of the stone there appears to be what was once the lower portion of a vertical column in relief. Except for the extreme lower part, it has been eradicated by a large concavity, apparently gouged from the back for that purpose after the stone had originally been shaped. The two stelae in Plaza 1 are the only ones at the site which are undoubtedly in situ.

Near the base of Stela 1 a considerable quantity of lime was encountered, together with some heavy fragments of an ornate incensario. The stela is 63 inches high and has a maximum width of 25 inches (pl. 20, *a*).

STELA 2

Stela 2 was completely buried at the base of the mound at the west end of Plaza 1. One of the local natives remembered having struck a stone there years before in cultivating his milpa, and thus we were able to locate it. Like Stela 1, it was found standing erect, evidently in situ. The stone was well dressed, but heavier and thicker than Stela 1 and perfectly plain. Sitting against the southwest corner of the base was the lower half of an elaborate winged incensario embedded in a mass of lime made from burned sea shells, including some of oyster. A few feet away lay the remains of another incensario in the form of a "Tlaloc"; this had been coated with a thin white stucco layer. The stela is 60 inches high and 84 inches in circumference. It is almost square in cross section (pl. 20, *b*).

STELA 3

This stela stands at the south end of Plaza 2 and is carved from a block of volcanic breccia, the upper part being much eroded. With this exception, however, the design is pretty well preserved, although the surface is somewhat rough. The carving represents a standing figure facing to the left and wearing a buccal mask and circular ear disk. At first glance it looks as though he were holding a long spear, point downward. Closer inspection, however, shows that what looks

like the lower part of a spear is really an ornamental apron drape, like those worn by the figures on Stelae 5, 6, 8, and 10, while the upper part of the "spear handle" which the figure holds in both hands is an upright tridentlike object analogous to that held by the figure on Stela 8. The bustle or rear apron string is in the form of a plumed serpent tail, like that on Stela 9. On the feet are sandals, tied with elaborate knots in front, and the figure is standing on a rectangular "jaguar mask" panel. The stela is 73 inches long, 30 inches wide, and 18 inches thick (pl. 21, *a*, and fig. 10, *c*).

FIGURE 8.—Carved monument from Santa Lucia Cozumalhualpa.

STELA 4

This stela has carved on it the representation of a man seated on a "throne" and facing to the right. He wears a large circular ear ornament and a curious wide rectangular headdress. In his left hand he holds a fan upraised in front of his face; in his right hand he holds a long pointed bag, like that on Stela 11. Over his knee is a large glyph representing what seems to be an animal head in profile. Over this is the number 5 expressed by five dots. Not only does Stela 4 resemble Stela 11 in style, but these are the only two monuments at the site carved from the same fine-grained basalt (pl. 21, *b*, and fig. 14, *b*).

The stone is 66 inches long, 36 inches wide and 18 inches thick. This figure is reminiscent of one from Santa Lucia Cozumalhualpa, Guatemala (fig. 8).

STELA 5

This stela has been broken in two pieces, which we fitted together as closely as possible. An elaborately costumed standing figure is represented, facing to the left with left hand upraised, the fist clenched. The right index finger points to the middle of a vertical "glyph" column, which he faces. The designs on this column have been almost completely effaced, but faint traces of bar and dot numerals can be detected in the lower half. By analogy with Stelae 6 and 8, it seems probable that the lower half of this column formerly contained an Initial Series date, at the beginning of which the figure is pointing. The personage depicted on the stela wears an elaborate animal headdress, on top of which is a plumed serpent with arched body, and on the back of which is a serpent head with wide-open mouth (pl. 22, *a*, and fig. 10, *a*).

An extremely interesting feature of this monument is that it is almost a duplicate, in every elaborate detail, of the so-called "Chapultepec" stone, of unknown provenience, now in the National Museum of Mexico. For the sake of comparison, a reproduction of the latter is published here (fig. 10, *b*). An important item in this connection is the well-preserved glyph column on the Chapultepec stone, which gives a clue as to the probable nature of the glyphs used at Cerro de las Mesas.

The stela is 86 inches long, 38 inches wide, and 18 inches thick.

STELA 6

The carving on Stela 6 is the best preserved of any monument at Cerro de las Mesas (pl. 23, and figs. 9; 11, *b*). The figure on the stela represents an elaborately costumed individual, shown in profile facing to the left. The headdress represents a conventionalized animal head surmounted by a serpent whose tail hangs down behind the headdress to the right, and whose head with open mouth and projecting bifurcated tongue can be seen at the left. The upper middle part of the design is defaced. From the mouth of the figure is a small but complex speech scroll. To the left of the figure is a vertical glyph column

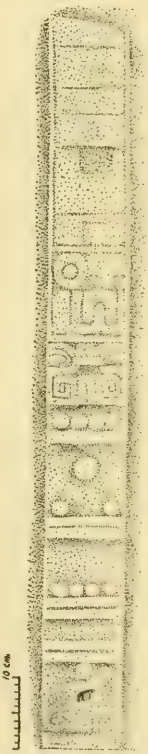

FIGURE 9.—Glyph column on Stela 6, partly restored. Cerro de las Mesas.

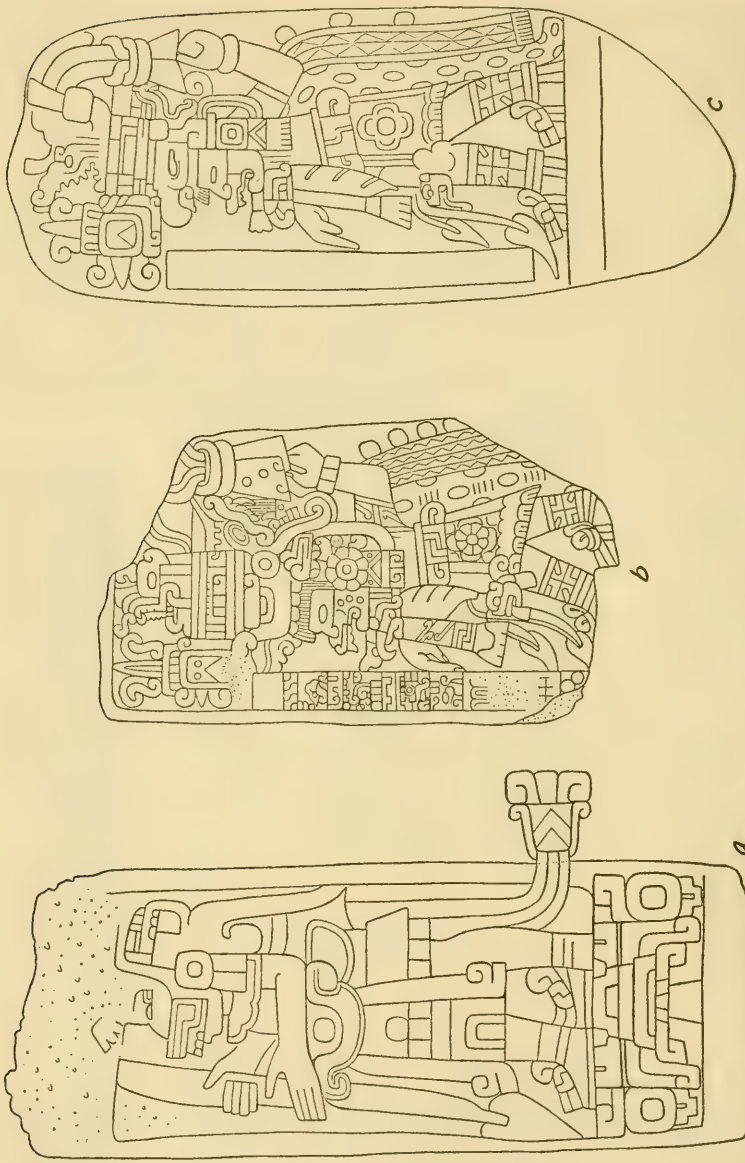

FIGURE 10.—*a*, Stela 5. *b*, The Stela of San Miguel Chapultepec. *c*, Stela 3. Cerro de las Mesas.

carved in the same relief as the figure itself. The glyphs and bar and dot numerals on it are in very low relief, so that the elements on the upper part of the column are in large part indistinguishable. Those portions which remain can only be seen with the light striking them at an angle. The bar and dot numerals on the lower half of the column are still fairly clear when the right light is thrown across them. The bars and dots were drawn freehand, the dots being of somewhat

irregular circular form and the lines of the bars not geometrically exact. The elements of each numeral are placed with a minimum of spacing. When bars and dots are combined, the dots rest directly on the bar. Where a single dot is used to indicate the Katun coefficient,

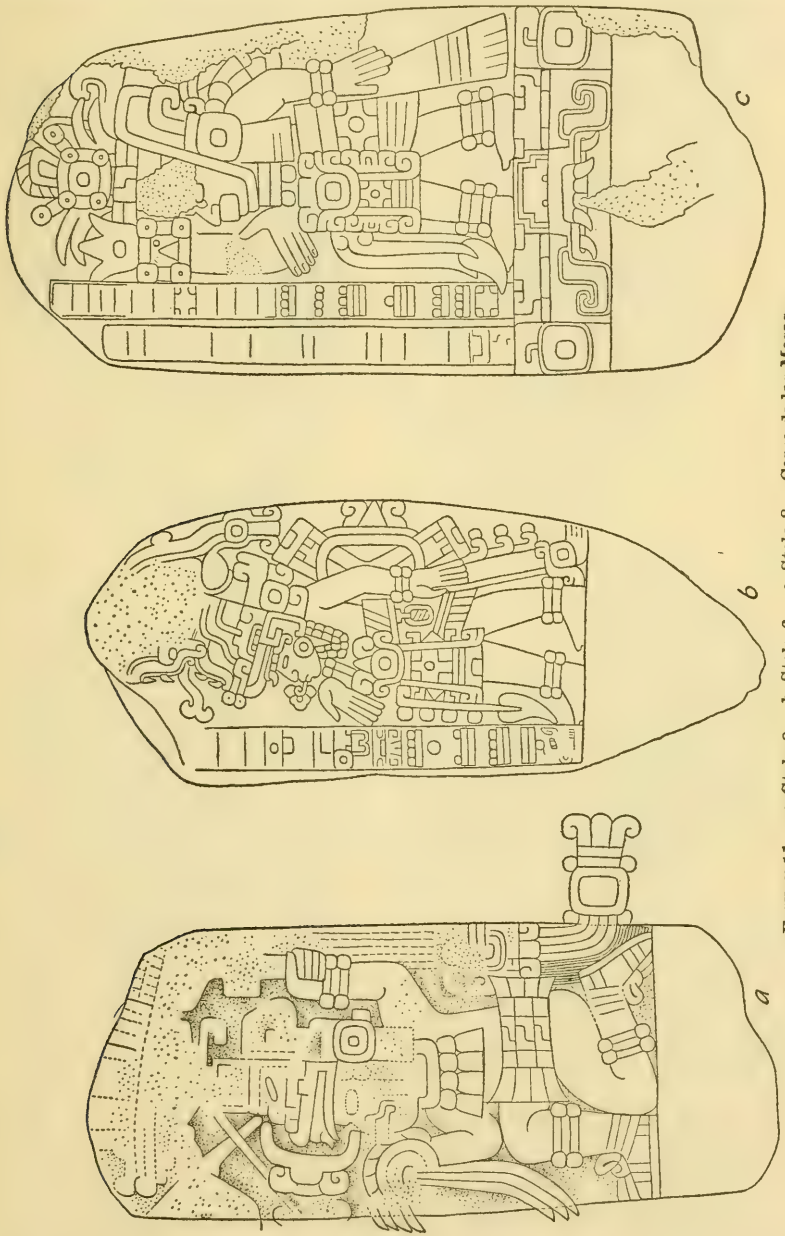

FIGURE 11.—*a*, Stela 9. *b*, Stela 6. *c*, Stela 8. Cerro de las Mesas.

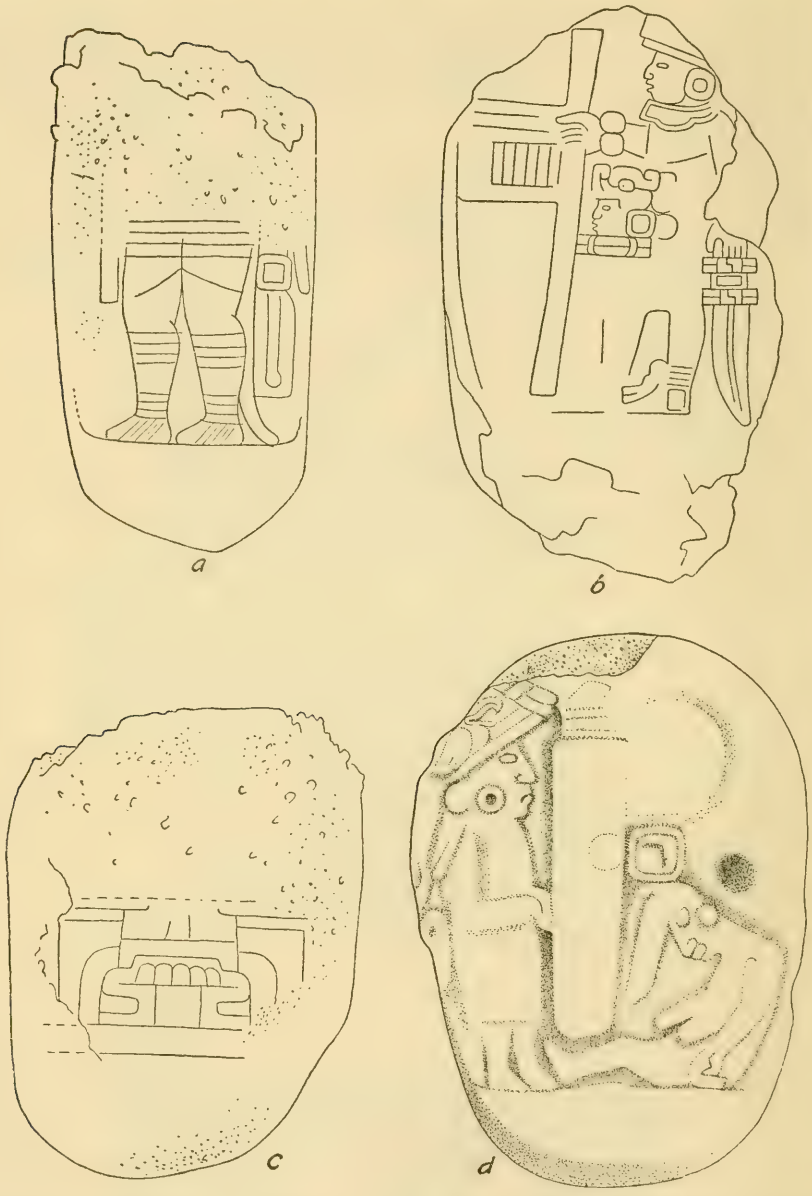

FIGURE 12.—*a*, Stela 14. *b*, Stela 11. *c*, Stela 13. *d*, Monument 2, back. Cerro de las Mesas.

the dot is considerably enlarged. This is reminiscent of the Katun 2 date at Oxintok, Yucatan, in which the Katun dots are considerably enlarged (Hay et al., 1940, pl. 1).

The Initial Series reads 9–1–12–14–10=1 Oc (3 Uayeb) (fig. 9). This date is interesting in that it records the next to the last day of

the year. In the Maya area there are several inscriptions terminating in 3 Uayeb, but the writer does not know of any ending in any other day of the Uayeb period. The day sign at the base of the column is puzzling. According to the calculation it represents one Oc. The dot representing the one is closely spaced between the numeral 10 and the day sign. The latter is not very clear. It looks something like a bat face in profile, with a bare mandible over the lower part of the face. Of this identification, the writer feels very uncertain.

FIGURE 13.—Monument 1, four views. Cerro de las Mesas.

Just above the Baktun coefficient, where in a Maya date the introducing glyph should be, is a defaced glyph, the exact nature of which is also uncertain. Parts of other glyphs above this can still be discerned.

The back of Stela 6 is not flat like almost all of the others at the site, but is irregularly round, the stone having been left in its natural shape.

STELA 7

This monument lay face down, looking like an ordinary boulder in the middle of the monument plaza. When turned over, it was found to have on its face the well-preserved carving of a standing,

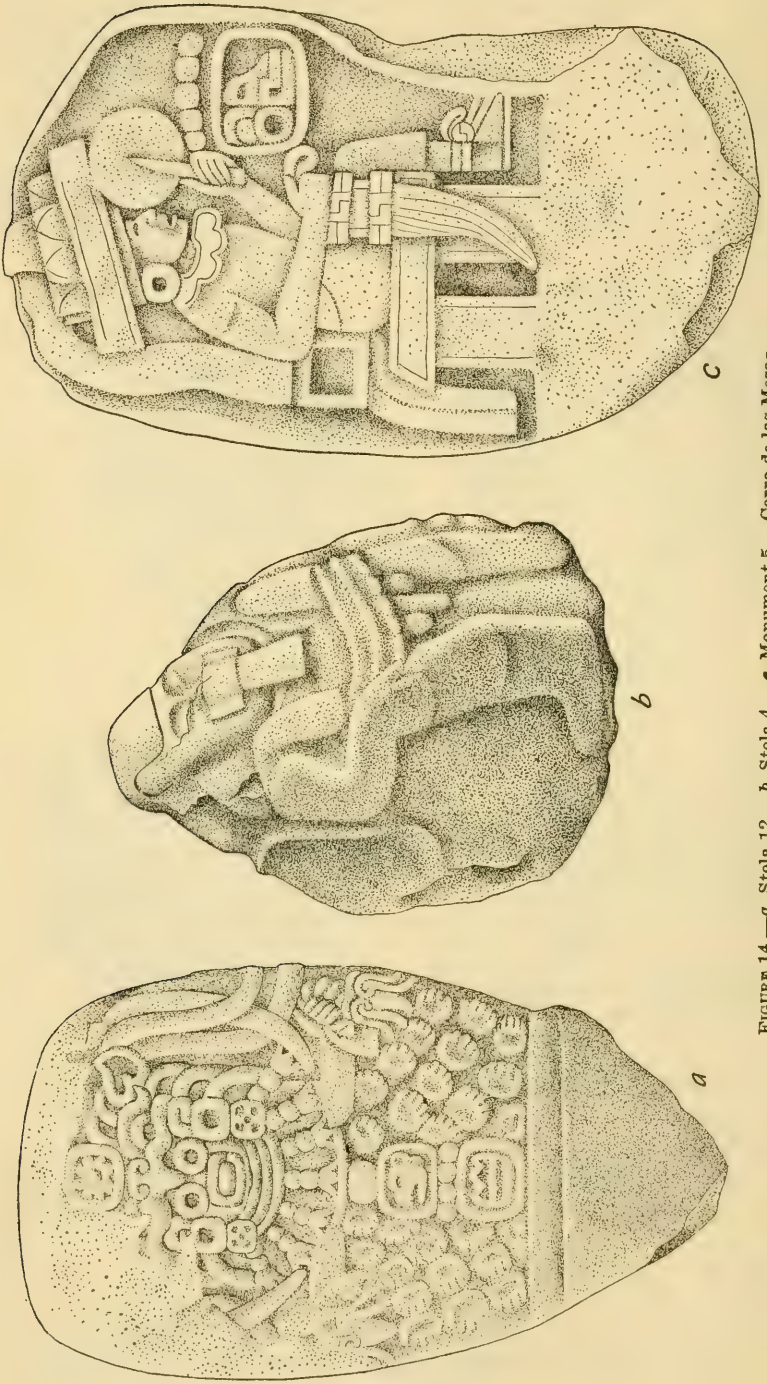

FIGURE 14.—*a*, Stela 12. *b*, Stela 4. *c*, Monument 5. Cerro de las Mesas.

full-face, male figure. The legs are separated in a wide V, the toes pointing outward. A belt, with a conventionalized knot in front, is worn around the hips. A double, flat collar hangs over the chest and a tear-shaped pendant hangs from each ear. The right hand grasps what looks like the handle of a stone ax with decorative plumes hanging from the upper part. (Compare with Stela 2, La Venta.) The left hand grasps a circular object with a spiral inside and from which hangs an object like a fringed pouch. This spiral ornament reminds one somewhat of the Quetzelcoatl cross section of a conch shell. A headdress like an inverted U hangs over the top of the head. A groove passes along the middle of it, and it is curiously spotted with small circular pits. This same pitting decorates the upper element of the collar. On top of the headdress is carved a small head. Over the left shoulder is a circular ornament like a sunflower with four long narrow "ribbons" hanging from it, each with a circle and dot in the middle. Originally the carved surface was highly polished, sections of polished surface remaining on the lower portions of the design. The basalt from which this monument was carved is harder and finer grained than most monuments at the site. It is about 60 inches high and seems to have been carved on a naturally shaped flat boulder (pls. 26; 31, *b*).

STELA 8

This is the largest stela at Cerra de las Mesas and is the most carefully dressed and squared. It is made of basalt of even texture, but unfortunately the carved surface has suffered considerable erosion. Apart from its size and artistic merit, it is of exceptional interest because it has on it one of the two decipherable Initial Series dates at the site. In many respects it resembles quite closely the design on Stela 3. The principal figure is an elaborately costumed individual, facing to the left and standing on a well-carved jaguar mask panel. In front of his face he apparently holds up a rather bulky object terminating in a tridentlike object resembling a familiar Zapotec and Mixtec glyph. In front of the standing figure are two vertical glyph columns as high as the size of the stone permits. The entire outside column is so badly eroded that probably none of the glyphs can be restored. The upper half of the inside column is in the same condition. However, the Initial Series occupying the lower half of this column is carved in higher relief than the glyphs and is still in fair condition and may be read. The Baktun number has been somewhat defaced, the second dot from the left having been knocked off and the one on the right has a crack in the stone passing through it. However, there seems little doubt that a 9 was repre-

sented. The complete series reads 9–4–18–16–8=9 Lamat (11 zotz). The interesting feature of this series is that the day sign at the bottom of the column actually is a close approximation of the Lamat sign as used by the Maya. It is also the conventional Venus symbol. The numbers comprising the column are equally separated, the final space being bisected by the coefficient of the day sign (pl. 24 and fig. 11, *c*).

As in Stela 6, and probably Stela 5, the hand of the standing figure points at the beginning of the Initial Series, as though to direct especial attention to it. From traces remaining of the undecipherable glyphs on this stela and Stela 6, it is likely that they resembled in character those on the so-called "Chapultepec stone" (fig. 10, *b*).

Stela 8 is 96 inches long, 42 inches wide, and 21 inches thick.

STELA 9

This stone, on the east side of Plaza 1, has carved on its face the representation of a kneeling figure with the left arm upraised and the hand grasping an upheld object. The right hand, with elbow on knee, is holding in front a circular object which seems to have plumes depending from it. The figure wears an animal headdress, a necklace with tassellike pendants, a broad belt, and a bustle which evidently takes the form of a plumed serpent. He wears wrist and leg ornaments and has sandals on his feet (pl. 21, *c*, and fig. 11, *a*).

The stone of which the stela is carved is a volcanic breccia, which has eroded, producing a rough surface which obscures the finer details of the design. The stone is well dressed and squared, and before suffering from erosion it must have been one of the handsomest stelae at the site.

The figure on this stela resembles quite closely a kneeling figure with an "Olmec" face, recently discovered by Eric Thompson, carved on a large boulder at San Isidro Piedra Parada, Guatemala.

STELA 10

This stela, made from a volcanic breccia, has suffered more from erosion than any other stone at the site. It has carved on it a standing figure facing to the right, an unusual feature, as the orthodox position at Cerro de las Mesas is facing to the left. Although the surface is badly defaced, the standing figure apparently has a jaguar rather than a human face, another unique feature. Although the carving seems to have been less skillfully done, this stela resembles most closely Stela 6. The figure wears the same bustle and apron drape and the same ankle ornaments (pl. 25, *a*). Resemblances are also evident with

Stelae 3 and 8, as the same tridentlike object appears to be represented. Stelae 3, 6, 8, and 10, in fact, seem to constitute a group.

Of this group Stela 10 exhibits the least artistic skill.

The stone is 76 inches long, 45 inches wide, and 16 inches thick.

STELA 11

This stela seems to be carved in a style somewhat different from the majority at the site, but resembling somewhat Stela 4. Although parts of the design are well preserved, on the whole the stone is rather badly damaged. A standing figure is represented, facing to the left. He wears a large circular ear disk and holds a long pointed pouch in one hand. In front of him is an object that looks like a banner and what seems to be a stand on which is a head mounted on two bars bound together and looking somewhat like a Zapotecan glyph. The stone was evidently not very carefully dressed in the first place, although traces of a well-smoothed surface remain (pl. 25, *b*, and fig. 12, *b*).

It is 65 inches long, 35 inches wide, and about 14 inches thick, the thickness being irregular.

STELA 12

This stone lies in Plaza 3 in the flat just north of Mound 5, and is one of the three stelae in this plaza. It is shaped about the same as Stela 6, being round on the back and flat on the face. However, it contains no carved decoration whatever, sharing this doubtful distinction only with Stela 2.

It is 66 inches long and 28 inches wide.

STELA 13

This monument had become almost completely buried. Apparently the upper part of the stela had been broken off and the stone reworked into an oval shape. All of the carved design had been carefully pecked off, excepting for the mask panel at the base (fig. 12, *c*). Because of the existence of this mask panel, it seems probable that the original stela belonged to the group containing Stelae 3 and 8. Excavation beneath this monument revealed that it had been erected on an individual rectangular stucco-covered earth platform (pl. 27, *a*). This platform was in the shape of a much truncated pyramid with rounded corners. It had been resurfaced about 20 times, and in each instance the corners had been painted red. This platform is 72 inches square and 13 inches of stucco remain at the base, although it was undoubtedly higher originally. In its present form the stela is 48 inches long, 34 inches wide, and 14 inches thick.

STELA 14

This stela, the third in Plaza 3, lies at the northeast base of the high mound. It is incomplete, the upper part being broken off. Apparently, it had been broken while still standing and partially buried, since the upper part of the remaining portion has eroded so badly as to have completely eradicated that portion of the carved design. The lower part shows the lower half of a standing figure facing to the left (pl. 20, *c*). The stone from which the monument was carved is well squared, the sides and back being flat and smooth. The stela is 32 inches wide, 15 inches thick, and its present length is 65 inches.

STELA 15

This stela lies alone at the west base of the principal mound, being the only monument on that side. The carving on the stone seems quite different in character from that on the other stelae at the site. It represents an ornate figure in full face, with circular Tlaloc-like eyes and wearing a jaguar headdress with a damaged glyphlike ornament in front, and long plumes hanging down the sides. The hands are each grasping a short twisted object resembling a piece of rope unraveled at the end. Large circular ear plugs are worn, below which are circular ornaments showing a cross with a dot in the center. A wide collar passes over the chest, from which depend seven tassellike ornaments. Most of the remainder of the design area is covered with a puzzling series of objects, which may represent shells. In the lower center are two vertically placed glyphs. The upper one shows an animal head in profile, and below this the numeral 4 and another glyph. This may represent the date 1 Ocelot 4 Water. The stone has suffered damage on the upper right-hand side, but excepting for surface detail, most of the design is intact. The stone was carefully shaped and dressed, the sides and back being smooth (pl. 22, *b*).

It is 77 inches long, 44 inches wide, and 20 inches thick.

MONUMENT 1

This stone lies at the southern edge of the monument plaza. It is in the form of a somewhat laterally compressed hemisphere, the curved surface of which is covered with carving. The stone itself may represent a conventionalized head, as it has on either side what looks like a large ear plug. On one end of the stone is represented a standing or kneeling figure, with one empty eye socket, and a sharp implement in the act of gouging out the other eye. This is an episode which is occasionally represented in the codices.

On the other end of the stone is what may be a sun symbol. A face is shown in the middle of a device like a simplified Mexican "calendar stone" (pl. 29 and fig. 13).

MONUMENT 2

From an artistic standpoint Monument 2 is probably the most striking object at Cerro de las Mesas (pls. 26, 31, *a*). It consists of a head powerfully sculptured in full relief. On the forehead is an ornament something like a fleur-de-lis. A large nose ornament lies over the upper lip, with a curling, moustachelike scroll on each side of the mouth. The lower jaw seems bare, and the upper teeth exposed. Circular ear ornaments are worn, and from each eye three streaks, like tears, pass over the cheeks. This head may represent the same personage indicated on Stela 3, the principal point of difference being the absence on the latter of the curling "moustaches" beside the mouth. There are also similarities with Stela 8, and these may give us a clue to the period to which this fine head belongs. The back of the head is flat, and it is decorated with a design in low relief, so crudely done that it seems certain to have been done at a later time than the head itself was sculptured (pl. 27, *b*, and fig. 12 *d*). This design shows at the left a standing male figure, facing to the right. At the right is a seated nude female figure in what appears to be an attitude of complete dejection. Between these two figures is a vertical column which may once have been decorated, but which now contains no ornamentation whatever. From the shape of the head, it appears that it was made to lie on its back, looking upward. It is 69 inches long, 40 inches wide, and 30 inches thick.

MONUMENT 3

This is a plain stone ball carved in the form of a slightly oblate spheroid. This stone lies within the monument plaza (pl. 30, *d*).

MONUMENT 4

This is a stone ball somewhat smaller than Monument 3, and with one plane surface. It also lies in the monument plaza (pl. 30, *b*).

MONUMENT 5

An almost completely buried stone, near the middle of Plaza 2, when excavated turned out to be this curious monument, seemingly representing a fat standing male figure, with the toes pointing outward, and, because of the shape of the stone, backward as well. The

genitalia are plainly represented. The right hand is shown as grasping some object over the right knee, while the left hand hangs by the side. Two pendant ornaments hang over the front of the shoulders. A broad low crest covers the top of the head and a triple belt goes around the waist. A broad rectangular ornament passes across the upper lip, and from it hangs a broad rectangular object, almost like a protruding tongue. The observer is struck at once by the resemblance of this monument to the famous Tuxtla Statuette, a resemblance which is more in form and spirit than in detail (pl. 28 and fig. 14, *c*).

MONUMENT 6

Near the southeastern base of the principal mound at one corner of the monument plaza, a small portion of a hard, fine-grained basaltic stone projected above the ground. When excavated this proved to be what was left of a large and massive monument which had been so carefully and thoroughly defaced that only a few small sections of the decorated surface remain. These exhibit a well carved and highly polished surface, but not enough of the surface remains to give a hint as to the nature of the monument. It must have been, however, one of the finest, if not the finest at the site.

MONUMENT 7

This is a stone carved in the form of an animal or reptile head, and is complete. The eyes are shown as half closed, with a wide circle surrounding them. Teeth are indicated the full length of the wide mouth, with a long canine fang projecting downward on each side of the front part of the mouth (pl. 30, *a*).

At present this monument lies under a mango grove at the edge of the village of Ojochal, about a mile north of Cerro de las Mesas. It was moved from the monument plaza at Cerro de las Mesas to its present site about 15 years ago, according to the natives.

MONUMENT 8

This monument is in the form of a head, probably of an anthropomorphic monkey. The eyes are round and wide and have realistic eyebrows represented over them. The nose is broad and rather flat. The lips are thin and parted, exposing six teeth, with the two front incisors long and rodentlike. On each side of the mouth is a curling "moustache" element as on a Tlaloc. Hair is represented on the top and back of the head by parallel vertical striations. A headband passes over the forehead and has an ornament in glyph form in front. The head is 30 inches high (pl. 30, *c*).

At present this monument lies in a field near the edge of the village of Cocuite. It was moved from the east side of the monument plaza at Cerro de las Mesas several years ago, where, of all the monuments at the site, it was the center of the most superstitious regard from the natives of the region. It was formerly the custom among many to bring eggs or chickens to it at night as offerings; for what specific purpose we were unable to determine, other than to ward off witchcraft. A native of Cocuite, wishing to profit by it, brought it to his house, but before long became frightened, and hauled it out to the field outside the town, where it now reposes.

MISCELLANEOUS

In addition to the foregoing, there are four large unworked stones in Plaza 2, one unworked cigar-shaped stone in Plaza 3, one flat unworked stone in the middle of Plaza 4, and a large stone set up at the north edge of the platform on which Mound 2 is erected.

CONCLUSION

On stylistic grounds, it is possible to suggest a relative chronology for the stone monuments at Cerro de las Mesas. Monument 5 seems to be the earliest in style. The low, flat median crest, the outpointing feet, and the simple yet confident handling of the subject matter suggest an early but developed art style. The representation of the genitalia, relatively unusual in Mexico, suggests the early "Danzante" figures of Monte Albán. The generalized resemblance of the entire sculpture to the Tuxtla Statuette suggests a Baktun 8 dating. Next in point of time would come the dated Stelae 6 and 8, and Stela 5 with its undecipherable glyph column. These three stelae are made from fairly fine-grained basalt of good quality, and all three of these stones probably came from the same source. Very close to them in point of time must be Stelae 3, 10, 13, and 14. These stones are so closely related in style and subject matter to the preceding three as to be assignable to the same general period. This group has been manufactured from basalt from a different source apparently, since it contains hard inclusions like a volcanic breccia, and erosion produces a rough surface effect. Whether they precede or follow the dated stones in time is a problem. In this complete group 3, 8, and 13 have "mask panels" below the carved figures.

The most recent of the stelae, the writer would surmise, are 4 and 11. They are carved from a hard fine-grained basalt different from the others at the site. Stylistically, they stand alone. The numerical "name" glyph on Stela 4, the long pouch, the seat, and the fan suggest subject matter of more recent origin, as does the banner and the pouch

on Stela 11. Stela 15 also seems to be of relatively more recent date. The Tlaloc-like eyes, the flowing plumes, and especially the "Tonalamatl" date seem to belong to a different culture. The twisted "ropes" held in the hands suggest the ceremonial penitential ropes of the Zapotecs (Seler, 1904, p. 283). Incidentally, this is the one stela which stands alone, having been placed on the opposite side of the principal mound from all the rest.

Stela 9 with the kneeling figure is somewhat puzzling. The writer is inclined to place it with the more recent group. The necklace of "tassels" is reminiscent of that on Stela 15. The use of flowing plumes is another later feature. The kneeling posture is unique and also tends to place it with the later monuments, each of which is highly individual in composition as contrasted with the early group, which is quite stereotyped in style.

Monument 1 the writer would also assign to the more recent group. The incident of gouging out an eye is frequently represented in the Zapotecan and Mexican codices. In the former, the act is performed by another, priest or god, while in the latter it is self-inflicted. According to Seler, this act, as represented in the codices of the Borgian group, is connected with Venus ceremonials (Seler, 1906, p. 367). The "sun" symbol on one end of the stone also suggests a relatively recent art style.

The relationship of Monument 2 to Stelae 3 and 8 has already been pointed out, and it can be placed with confidence in that group, which represented the "golden age" of stone carving at Cerro de las Mesas.

LA VENTA

The archeological site of La Venta is situated on a sandy island lying between the Tonalá River and its tributary, the Blasillo, in the midst of the great coastal mangrove swamp of northern Tabasco (Stirling, 1940 b). The central feature is a large pyramidal earth mound erected on a rectangular platform, almost 100 yards square. The combined height of the base and the mound is 105 feet. At the north base of this mound lies an unusually interesting rectangular stone-fenced enclosure. About 300 yards south of the main mound is a long mound which extends about 200 feet in a north-south direction. Near this are a few smaller mounds. Scattered about the site are numerous stone monuments, many of which are remarkable for their size and their high artistic merit. The grouping of high pyramidal earth mounds in conjunction with a long mound is reminiscent of many sites in southern Veracruz, such as Tres Zapotes and Cerro de las Mesas. Unlike these, however, there appears to be a certain amount of orientation to the principal structures at La Venta, the

alignment being based on an axial line in an approximate north-south direction.

The first mention of the La Venta site is by Charnay (1887), who in 1881 heard about it in an inaccurate way from a native in Comalcalco. Charnay says:

> Besides these ruins [Comalcalco] others are to be met at Blasillo, situated on the Toltec march of migration, answering the description given by Bernal Diaz regarding Tonala. I hear from a montanero, who first discovered them, that an important Indian City formerly existed there, whose monuments, like those of Comalcalco, consist of caryatides, columns, and statues; but in this abominable weather it is utterly impossible to visit them.

The first real description of La Venta is by Blom and La Farge (1925), who visited it in 1925. They were able to spend but one day at the site, and did not have the time or equipment for excavation. However, they saw Stelae 1, 2, and 3; Altars 2, 3, and 4; and Monument 1. In addition to this, Blom proved that the two stone figures now standing in the grounds of the Instituto Juarez in Villa Hermosa originally came from La Venta. It was Blom's photograph of the almost buried Monument 1 that attracted the writer's interest to La Venta, because of the obvious resemblance of this monument to the Colossal Head of Tres Zapotes. To avoid confusion, the numbers given by Blom to the monuments discovered by him have been retained, with the exception of the one he calls Altar 1, which on excavation turned out to be a stela; this has been designated as Stela 3.

In 1931, Joyce published a note concerning the site from information received from H. A. Knox, who stumbled onto it during a hunting trip, and furnished pictures showing Altar 4 and Stela 1. (Joyce, 1931). The most interesting feature of the illustrations accompanying this note is a picture of two good-sized pottery heads of related forms, presumably from La Venta, one of which is a typical "baby-face" type. Joyce was evidently unaware of Blom's previous publication.

Not counting the stone columns, we located 17 carved monuments at La Venta, including those listed above. With the 2 at Villa Hermosa, this makes a total of 19 now known from the site. To these might be added the unique stone sarcophagus and the tomb of basalt columns discovered by Dr. Drucker during the 1942 excavations. It is quite probable that further explorations will reveal more, either hidden in the dense jungle or buried in the thick deposit which has accumulated over the site. There seems little doubt that a carved altar lies completely buried near the base of the detached mound known as Cerro Encantado, since two natives independently led me to the place and each seemed surprised that it was not visible. They stated that a short time ago the upper surface was flush with the ground. Our time at the site was limited and we did not have time to probe for it. A

small circular carved stone "like a calendar stone" was formerly on the surface near Monument 4. Hunters carried it away a few years ago.

One of the striking features of La Venta is the lavish use of columnar basalt. We have been unable to locate the source of this material. The nearest occurrence of volcanic rock is in the region of the San Martín Pajapan volcano, some 60 miles in an air line to the north. Insomuch as columnar basalt is also used at archeological sites such as Tres Zapotes and El Meson, it would seem highly probable that the material was obtained somewhere in the Tuxtla-San Martín region. The question of its transportation to La Venta constitutes an interesting problem. The transportation of 20- to 50-ton blocks of stone overland for such a distance would seem to constitute an almost superhuman task, especially when it is remembered that La Venta is on an island in the middle of a great swamp region.

The most probable hypothesis would seem to be that the stones were secured near the seacoast, and placed on large rafts, whence they were floated along the coast to the mouth of the Tonala River, which was then ascended to La Venta Island. At the present time, the river is a considerable distance from the island, but aerial photographs show clearly an old channel which touched the north end of the island. It is quite probable that this marked the course of the river at the time the site was occupied. At the present time, there is enough water along this old course for the inhabitants of La Venta to use it as a short cut in going by canoe to Tonala.

STELA 1

This unusual monument probably represents the open mouth of a jaguar, with a standing human figure in almost full relief. The panel above the figure shows a conventionalized jaguar face, while below the feet are a series of defaced serrations which are probably meant for teeth. The human figure, possibly representing a female, is nude except for a short fluted skirt, a forehead band, and possibly a close-fitting helmet. Ornaments appear to be hanging from the ear lobes. A trench dug beneath the stone indicates that the back is plain. At present this stela lies a short distance outside the southwest corner of the stone-fenced enclosure, and probably formerly had been set up within it. The stela is 8 feet 3 inches long, 2 feet 11 inches wide at the base, and 2 feet 5 inches thick. The human figure is 4 feet 10 inches high (pl. 33, *a*).

STELA 2

This large stela represents a standing male figure in half relief. The lower part of the design is mutilated, but evidently the toes point

outward. Diagonally across his chest the figure holds a staff, the handle of which is grasped with both hands. From the upper end a tassellike ornament hangs over the right shoulder. Behind the shoulders and back is a circular object, possibly a shield with ornaments hanging on either side of the hips. Bands are worn around the wrist and ankles. In the ears are circular ear disks, and on the head is a remarkably tall and elaborate headdress, the extreme upper part of which is mutilated. The headdress seems to be held in place by means of a chin strap.

In the spaces on either side of the central figure, carved in low relief, are six crouching, barefooted figures, three on each side, one over the other. All six appear to be brandishing axes or batons. Each of them wears a broad belt, circular ear ornaments, and a headdress fastened by means of a chin strap. The three figures at the observer's left are better preserved than the ones on the right. Their faces are like anthropomorphic jaguars with projecting fangs. All of these figures are looking to the right, the first group looking backward over their shoulders in order to do so. The face of the central figure, although somewhat worn, is "La Venta" in type and the expression one of serene dignity (pl. 34).

Judging from the erosion of the stone, the monument had fallen in such a manner that the right side became buried, leaving the left side exposed for a longer period. This stela is 11 feet 5 inches long, and has a maximum width of 6 feet 9 inches. The thickness is approximately 18 inches.

It seems to have been carved from a naturally formed slab of stone, which had a smooth but irregular surface. Not much attempt was made to level off these irregularities, and the carved designs follow them over the surface.

STELA 3

This interesting monument, the largest at La Venta, is located in the middle of the stone-fenced court, and faces north. The back and sides are plain, but the face is entirely covered with an elaborate composition in low relief (pl. 35). This huge stone was excavated and photographed with considerable difficulty, since it was leaning forward at a steep angle. Although protected somewhat from the elements by the angle of the stone, nevertheless the upper portion of the design is considerably weathered. The lower two-thirds, which had been buried, is very little weathered, but it had been mutilated, apparently intentionally, in aboriginal times. The lower part of the composition consists of two large human figures represented in profile, facing each other. The one on the observer's left wears a belt, arm bands, a skirt, and an extremely tall headdress. In the right hand is

carried a staff. No ear disk is worn, the ear being realistically represented. Unfortunately, the face has been scaled off. It is possible that a female is intended. The other large figure, slightly taller, represents a handsome bearded man with aquiline nose, large circular ear ornament, and a complicated headdress. Most of the body has been scaled off. Both figures appear to be wearing shoes with pointed, upturned toes. Above these two principal figures can be seen at least four other human or anthropomorphic forms, floating about in various postures. One of these is a "jaguar" man closely similar to those represented on Stela 2.

This stone, which has a calculated weight of about 50 tons, is 14 feet high, 6 feet 8 inches wide, and 36 inches thick. A large fragment broken from the upper right-hand side of the monument was found in the excavation in front of the stela.

This is probably the stone which Blom refers to as Altar 1, a natural enough mistake, as the stela was buried excepting for the curved upper portion, which made it appear as though it might have been circular in form.

STELA 4

This stone, well buried, lay in the flat about 100 feet north of the long mound. Judging from its shape, it was intended as a stela (pl. 33, *c*). Formerly covered on three sides with carved decorations, it has been defaced so completely that nothing can be deciphered of the original designs. The base is covered with scored striations (pl. 33, *d*). These may have been used to sharpen the stone tools of the carvers of the monument, as the surface of the base would not show when the stela stood up. It is about 5 feet high.

STELA 5

A large fragment of a worked stone was excavated just outside the stone enclosure near the southwest corner. Although there is no carved decoration, it seems to be a piece of what was once a large stela (pl. 33, *b*). In excavating this stone several large slabs of limestone were found lying south of the base. It is 7 feet high and 2 feet 6 inches thick.

ALTAR 1

This stone, presumably an altar, was discovered almost completely buried in the level ground south of the big mound. The altar, which is rectangular in shape, is in the form of a colossal head, which faces east toward the mound. It has been considerably mutilated, particularly on top. In spite of this mutilation the face still produces a striking effect on the observer. The nostrils are broad and flaring

and below them is represented a curving nose or lip ornament. The eyes are long and narrow, being almost rectangular in form. Above the eyes the beetling brows are separated by a puckered forehead, and over each brow rise vertical elements which may have been similar to those conventionalized "eyebrows" frequently represented on "baby-face" figures in jade. The north and south ends of the altar are decorated with a curious branching five-pronged element (pl. 36). A broad hairdress runs down the back. A curious feature of this altar is an irregular hole, possibly of natural origin, which runs through the stone from the north end and emerges through the mouth in front. Although the stone is roughly rectangular, the corners have been rounded off. The length is 9 feet 7 inches, the width 6 feet 10 inches, and the height 6 feet 2 inches.

ALTAR 2

This altar, placed on the south apron of the big mound, lies but a few feet east of Altar 3. It had fallen over on its back, or, more likely, was re-used in that position, so that the original front of the altar is now on top (pl. 38, *c*).

The carving represents a male figure seated cross-legged in an arched niche, holding some object, possibly a baby, on his lap. Perhaps the same subject as that on Altar 5 is intended, but the workmanship on Altar 2 is so primitive as to make the comparison a libel. The east and west sides of the altar are smooth and undecorated. The south side is rough. The stone is 4 feet 5 inches long, 4 feet 3 inches wide, and 3 feet 3 inches high.

ALTAR 3

A few feet west of Altar 2, on the south apron of the great mound, is Altar 3 (pl. 39). The workmanship on this altar is much superior to that of Altar 2, but unfortunately it has been considerably defaced. The front of the altar faces north, and, like the others, represents a male figure seated in a deep niche. He wears a high headdress with a chin strap similar to that on Altar 5, and also has ear plugs, a flat collar over his shoulders, and a rectangular, glyphlike chest ornament. The lower arms are broken off, and if they once held anything it is now gone. At the left of the niche is a panel with a standing figure in profile, carved in low relief. This figure wears a longish skirt and probably represents a female. The west end of the altar is bordered near the top with a horizontal band, below which is a row of circular dots. The base is bordered with another horizontal band originally supported by three oval elements, two of which still remain. On this, represented in low relief, are two figures seated

in profile. They face each other and are apparently engaged in lively discussion. They are skillfully carved, and the attitude and action is surprisingly realistic. The figure on the observer's right has a rather large pointed beard. He has a small headdress with a forehead band, and wears a belt and a string of beads around his hips. The other figure also wears a small headdress with a chin strap, and seems to have a small beard or a pointed chin. He wears a necklace and a broad belt. The east end of the altar has been entirely broken away. It is probable that this section contained a carved panel to balance that on the other side of the niche, and that the east end of the altar was also decorated in low relief.

Altars 2 and 3 are closely related in style to Altars 4 and 5, and if it were not that the principal figure of Altar 3 is so badly defaced, it might have compared favorably with them in artistic merit. The altar is carved from an almost cubical block of basalt, which formerly had an overhanging top, all the projecting sides of which have been broken off. It is 5 feet 6 inches long, 5 feet 3 inches wide, and 5 feet 3 inches high.

ALTAR 4

This interesting altar is remarkable both for its size and state of preservation (pl. 37, *a*). It is in the form of a rectangular block supporting a table top which projects on all four sides. The only notable mutilation which the altar has suffered has been the breaking off of the projecting top on the south side. On the front of the altar top is carved the face of a jaguar with an X-shaped element between the fangs. On either side of this face are some simple geometric elements. Stretching across the top of the altar behind this face is a raised area, giving the impression that a jaguar skin thrown across the altar is represented. The face of the altar stand shows a human figure in full relief seated cross-legged in a deep arched niche. He wears a small headdress with a band across the forehead, a broad flat collar over his shoulders, and a chest ornament. In each hand he grasps the end of a rope, which runs around the base of the altar, forming a border. That held in the right hand rounds the corner, where it is tied to the wrist of a seated figure carved in low relief on the south end of the altar (pl. 37, *b*). On each side of the niche in front of the altar are two pleasing, curving elements which break the blank areas on the front.

The north end of the altar had originally contained a design in low relief, probably comparable to that on the south end, but in aboriginal times this end was defaced and two deep rectangular niches carved in it (pl. 38, *b*). The back of the altar is plain. The niche in the front evidently represents the "'Olmec" open-jaguar-mouth motive since the designs on the band over the niche represent eyes.

Altar 4 faces east and is located in the flat near the east base of the long mound, being on the opposite side of this mound from Altar 5. In excavating in front of the altar, 99 large, highly polished jade beads, cylindrical and spherical in form, and one round amethyst bead were found. These beads were in position as strung in a necklace and two bracelets. The measurements of the altar are as follows:

Length of base	8 feet 5 inches.
Width of base	6 feet.
Height of base	3 feet 6 inches.
Original length of top	11 feet 5 inches.
Width of top	6 feet 4 inches.
Thickness of top	1 foot 9 inches.
Length of overhang	1 foot 6 inches.
Total height of altar	5 feet 3 inches.

ALTAR 5

This handsome example of aboriginal sculpture was discovered in a newly cleared banana patch, almost completely buried. It is located on level ground on the opposite side of the long mound from Altar 4, which it resembles in general form. Originally, it possessed a flat projecting table top, but this has been almost completely battered off. It is sculptured on the front and both ends, but the back is plain. Like Altar 4, it faces away from the mound, toward the west. Altar 4, being on the east side of the mound, faces east. The altar had settled forward at an angle, making it difficult in our limited time to obtain photographs of the front in proper perspective. The face of the altar shows an arched niche, in which is seated cross-legged a male figure carved in full relief. This figure wears a tall headdress in the form of a truncated cone. A band around the base of the headdress is decorated with an X on either side and in front a face with down-curved mouth set in an oval cartouche over which are three vertical cone-shaped elements. The ears of the principal figure are adorned with spool-shaped ear plugs, he wears a flat collar with a gorget over the chest, and on his lap he holds the limp figure of a baby (pl. 40).

The south end of the altar is carved in low relief and shows two seated adult figures facing west, and each holding a nude infantile figure in amusingly realistic positions. The faces of these small figures, however, have an adult appearance (pl. 41, *a*).

The north end of the altar is decorated with a similar design, representing two more seated adults, each holding an infantlike figure (pl. 41, *b*). Unfortunately, the southwest corner of the altar has been broken away, taking with it the faces of one of these pairs. As in Altar 4, it seems possible that the niche in front represents the open mouth of a jaguar.

Although this altar has been badly battered, fortunately most of the decorated areas remain in quite good condition, probably as a result of the stone being buried. In its entirety, this altar is one of the finest examples of sculptural art from pre-Columbian America. Because of the mutilations that it has suffered, the original over-all measurements cannot be given. At present the altar is 5 feet 1 inch high. The height of the seated figure in front is 3 feet 4 inches. The stone is a greenish-gray basalt with black crystalline inclusions.

ALTAR 6

This altar is located near a small mound in the Cerro Encantado group about a mile northwest of the main La Venta site. Although related in concept to the previously described altars from the main La Venta site, the art style is conspicuously different, the carving being angular and relatively crude (pl. 38, *a*). A figure seated cross-legged in a vestigial niche is represented. A small, broad headdress with a chin strap is worn, and possibly a face was represented in the middle of the headdress. The eyes of the figure are crudely carved and the nose is a triangular blob. The lower part of the face is broken off. The entire figure is represented as sitting on a projecting ledge, and the "table top" of the altar is indicated with a minimum of projection. At present the altar has settled backward somewhat, so that the figure in front looks upward. It was excavated with difficulty, as it had become wrapped in the buttresses of a large sapote tree. The top length is 4 feet 6 inches and the top width 2 feet 10 inches. The bottom length is 3 feet 5 inches and the height 3 feet 9 inches.

MONUMENT 1

This monument in the form of a colossal head was erected near the south base of the great mound only about 15 yards distant from Stela 2. The head faces south, away from the mound. It has settled to one side, but is apparently otherwise in position as set up (pl. 42, *a*). In general appearance this head, although considerably larger, is very similar to the Colossal Head of Tres Zapotes. The features are realistically represented and are "Olmec" in character. It is represented as wearing a helmetlike headdress with a headband and a U-shaped figure and jaguar fangs over the forehead. The back of the head is flat, a feature which it also shares with the Tres Zapotes head as well as with the other heads at La Venta. The state of preservation is very good. Most of the damage which has taken place is at the back of the stone. The top of the head is marked with a number of striations. It is difficult to tell whether these were intended as part of the decorative scheme or whether they are more modern tool

sharpening grooves. The following are some of the more interesting measurements:

Height	8 feet 1 inch.
Circumference	20 feet 10 inches.
Length of eyeball	1 foot 4 inches.
Width of nose	1 foot 11 inches.
Height of nose	1 foot 4 inches.
Length of mouth	2 feet 5 inches.
Breadth of mouth	11 inches.

MONUMENT 2

This is the middle one of three heads set in a row and facing north, two hundred yards north of the big mound. Like Monument 1, it wears a helmetlike headdress, which has an ornament like a bowknot in front. The cheeks are full, and the mouth represented with the lips parted and four front upper teeth showing. The corners of the mouth are wide, producing somewhat of a smiling effect. The stone is spotted with a number of hemispherical holes which look as though they may have been ground in. However, they may be owing to the eroding out of soft inclusions in the basalt. They are not bubbles such as often occur in lava. In the ear lobes are worn plain and moderately small ear disks. The head is well preserved, although some damage has been done to the upper lip and the lower part of the nose (pl. 43). The following are some of the measurements:

Height	6 feet 3 inches.
Circumference at headband	12 feet 11 inches.
Width of eyeball	12 inches.
Height of eyeball	6 inches.
Nose breadth	1 foot 10 inches.
Nose height	1 foot 2 inches.
Width of mouth	2 feet.

MONUMENT 3

This is the easternmost of the three heads placed in a row north of the great mound. It is flatter than the other heads at the site and the style is somewhat different. The fact that the face has suffered considerable erosion may enhance this individual appearance. The eyes are large and deep-set, the nose broad, and the mouth shown with the lips parted. In the ears are worn circular ear disks, with holes in the middle. No helmet or headband is indicated. On the back and to a lesser extent, on top, are many striated grooves, similar to those on the base of Stela 4. In addition to these, there are a number of hemispherical holes that look as though they had been ground, as in Monument 2. In this instance, however, sev-

eral of these holes are fairly large (pl. 42, *b*). The principal measurements are as follows:

Height	6 feet.
Width	5 feet 3 inches.
Thickness	2 feet 9 inches.
Circumference	13 feet 8 inches.
Eye length	1 foot 8 inches.
Eye width	7 inches.
Breadth of nose	1 foot 8 inches.
Height of nose	1 foot 3 inches.
Length of mouth	2 feet 2 inches.
Height of mouth	1 foot 1 inch.

MONUMENT 4

This is the largest colossal head at the site, being slightly larger than Monument 1, which it resembles in many respects (pl. 44, *a*). The features are very realistically represented and the face has a slight scowl produced by a puckering at the base of the nose. The lips are parted and four upper teeth are shown. An ornamented helmetlike headdress is worn, with striations on top as in Monument 1. The decorations on the headdress evidently represent jaguar fangs. The back of the head is flat (pl. 44, *b*) and the headband is represented as passing entirely around. The ears are shown with large ear disks decorated with a cross. The nose has been worn flat and the chin broken. Damage has also resulted from scaling, particularly on the right side, but in spite of these defects, this huge head still presents an imposing appearance. A fragment of the head recovered in excavating around it was coated with a smooth-surfaced dark purplish-red paint, indicating that originally the head had been so painted. The principal measurements follow:

Height	8 feet 5 inches.
Circumference	21 feet 7 inches.
Length of eyeball	1 foot 4 inches.
Width of nose	2 feet 4 inches.
Height of nose	1 foot 2 inches.
Width of mouth	2 feet 8 inches.

MONUMENT 5

This interesting figure was discovered near Stela 1, within the stone enclosure north of the big mound. It was completely buried except for the upper part of the crest on top of the head. It is probably the most typically "Olmec" of any carving from La Venta (pl. 45, *a*). It represents a kneeling "baby-face" figure with a median crest hanging over the forehead, and holding between the hands a rectangular bowl. The figure is 4 feet 8 inches high.

THE STONE ENCLOSURE

On the flat ground just north of the big mound lies a structure of unusual interest. This consists of a rectangular enclosure about 75 yards wide in an east-west direction and about 50 yards wide in a north-south direction (pl. 46, *a*). On the south side, nearest the mound are two smaller rectangular offsets each about 15 feet square. This entire area is fenced in by stone pickets of columnar basalt. The tops of these columns project a little above the surface of the ground and a number have the tops broken off. They are set as closely together as they can be placed. We made a small excavation in one corner of the enclosure, following these stone posts down to a depth of 5 feet without finding indication of the bottom. One of the fairly large columns was measured, and it was found to be 17 inches in diameter and 4 feet 8 inches in circumference. The length is not known, as we did not have time to excavate to the bottom. In about the middle of the enclosure is Stela 3, the largest at the site. Several yards west of this, Monument 5, the kneeling "baby-face" figure, was discovered; near the southwest corner was Stela 5. Old Sebastian told us that many years ago, another "idolo" was taken away from this place. This is probably one of those now at Villa Hermosa, illustrated by Blom (Blom and La Farge, 1926). It is probable that Stela 1 was also originally within this enclosure, as it now lies but a short distance outside the southwest corner, whither it was moved many years ago by mahogany cutters in an unsuccessful attempt to take it away, according to Sebastian. It seems highly probable that complete excavation of this area would produce interesting results, as the deep fill which it contains would completely cover any small or fallen monuments.

MONUMENT 6

Directly south of the stone enclosure and in line with its center was a low mound, which when excavated was found to cover a sandstone sarcophagus in the form of a conventionalized jaguar. This was covered with a lid on which was a shallow, rectangular depression. The box was almost filled with clay and contained a number of objects of jade (Stirling, 1942). (Pl. 47, *a*.)

MONUMENT 7

A few yards south of Monument 6, covered by the same mound and on the same north-south line, was an interesting closed tomb constructed of columnar basalt. It contained a limestone covered platform on which were placed several burials enclosed in cinnabar and accompanied by a considerable number of jade offerings (Stirling, 1942). (Pl. 48.)

STONE COLUMNS

Several stone columns occur at various localities on the site. The largest of these is located on top of the long mound at the south end. It is made of a hard, gritty, greenish-white stone, apparently of remote sedimentary origin. It is cylindrical in form, has a diameter of 2 feet 2 inches, a circumference of 6 feet, and an over-all length of 15 feet 4 inches. It is broken into two pieces. Its position on top of a mound is unique for a large stone among all of the sites we have investigated in southern Mexico (pl. 46, *b*).

A quarter of a mile northeast of the long mound is a steep gully. Slanting against the bottom of this are two pillars of a very hard basaltic stone. They are smooth of finish and rectangular in cross section. The two sides of each which are visible are without carved decorations. One is 5 feet 4 inches long and 13 inches square. The other is 6 feet 1 inch long by 13 inches square.

At the north base of the Cerro Encantado we excavated a cylindrical column made of the same hard, greenish, gritty stone as the large column on the long mound. This column is 7 feet 9 inches long. A groove passes completely around it about a foot from the top, and another about a foot from the bottom. The top terminates in a stem-like projection (pl. 45, *b*). It looks as though it may have originally represented a human figure.

CONCLUSION

La Venta is an important and interesting site. It appears to represent a single occupation. It is hoped that the ceramic studies which we are now conducting (1942) at the site will result in definitely placing the heroic type of "Olmec" sculpture in its proper ceramic horizon. If this can be successfully accomplished it is probable that this horizon may be related to the ceramic cultural column of Tres Zapotes. The close similarity of the Colossal Head of Tres Zapotes with the two largest heads at La Venta should then enable us with some certainty to place the approximate time of this interesting art. In accordance with present evidence, this type of sculpture would appear to be early. The infrequent use of feathers as an art motive seems to be an early trait in Middle American art. Likewise analogies exist with the art style of demonstrably early ceramic forms, specifically the "baby-face" heads such as those recovered by Vaillant at Gualapita in the Mexican Highlands, and in our excavations at Tres Zapotes; the use of chinstraps on solid figurines at Tres Zapotes; and the representations of median crests on the top of the head in early Tres Zapotes figurines similar to that represented on Monument 5 at La Venta.

IZAPA

This important site, located in the southeastern part of the State of Chiapas near the Guatemalan border, has been known locally for many years, but considering its relative accessibility, it is remarkable that more attention has not been paid to it. It was visited briefly by Karl Ruppert of the Carnegie Institution in 1938, and the next year by Dr. A. V. Kidder, but until the visit of the writer in April 1941, no excavations had been conducted there. On this occasion 7 days were spent at the site with Marion Stirling and Richard Stewart, photographer of the National Geographic Society. The excavations were confined to the stone monuments, no mound or stratigraphic excavations being undertaken. The new highway from Tapachula across the Guatemalan border passes close to Izapa; in fact, it cuts through the northern corner of the archeological zone. The site as such has no specific name locally. The Arroyo Izapa, a tributary of the Suchiate River, flows generally east of the locality, and the plain on which the site is located is known as "Los Terrenos de Izapa." The stream is relatively small in size and is clear during the dry season. The ground is very stony and large rocks and boulders are abundant. This fact adds to the difficulty of locating new monuments, as the natives recognize only those on which carved decorations show. The soil is fertile and at the present time milpas of coffee, cacao, and cane are cultivated on the site, although parts of it are covered with dense second-growth jungle. It is quite likely that more monuments will be found in these sections.

The stone monuments at Izapa are segregated into six groups, which for convenience have been designated by letters, although in three instances the "group" consists only of two monuments, if we consider a stela with its altar as one.

Groups A and B, which contain the majority of the carved stones, are arranged in quadrangles near the middle of the site, north of the principal mound. Group C contains six plain stelae with altars, arranged at the north and south bases of a low mound. An additional, isolated unexcavated stela (No. 17) has been placed with this group.

In addition to these principal monuments there are scattered here and there over the site various smooth flat stones which may have served as altars, and in the section north of the principal mound groups are a number of large stone mortars (pl. 62, *c*).

Very few potsherds are evident on the surface of the ground and they are not especially numerous in the stream bed. Very few sherds were encountered in the process of excavating the stelae. Such as were found are of a plain, crude, buff-colored ware. Only two figurine fragments were seen and these were not excavated. Both were solid, one a torso and the other a worn head. The eyes of the latter were modeled, and not of the punctate type.

There appears to be no true masonry, but there are signs of walls and structures of boulders, particularly in Groups E and F.

GROUP A

STELA 1

Stela 1 (pl. 49, *a*) is one of the best preserved at Izapa, and a good example of the typical art style which falls just short of realism to the extent that interpretation of details is often difficult. The main element in the design consists of a standing anthropomorphic figure, leaning over and grasping a decorated bowl or basket, which rests on a small stand or altar. The feet of this personage seem to represent serpents' heads, and the lower legs have winglike appendages attached, not unlike a "flying Mercury." A similar pair of appendages are attached to the forearms. The face, although somewhat eroded, appears never to have been very distinct, but seems more animal than human. The headdress is apparently a serpent's head. A raised area in front of the mouth might represent speech, in lieu of a speech scroll. The figure wears a breechcloth, which also terminates in a serpentlike head. On his back he carries an olla or basket, with a constricted neck and flaring rim. The area surrounding this, and back of the figure, is decorated with a series of rather complicated scrolls, reminding one of similar decorations on Stela 1 at El Baul, Guatemala. It compares with page 74 of the Dresden Codex.

The figure is represented as standing on a narrow ledge under which wavy lines depict water in which two fish are swimming. This water band terminates at either side with a combination of scrolls which suggest that this entire strip represents a two-headed monster.

Above the standing figure are two horizontal bands which evidently represent a highly conventionalized jaguar "mask panel." The area above this panel is also covered with a puzzling decoration which seems intended to confuse the observer. On one side are four small circles or dots and directly above them another serpent head.

The little stand or altar in the main design area is a type that seems to be represented on other stelae at Izapa. In form it resembles somewhat the "mountains" or place glyphs of the Mixtec Codices. The upper portion of this element resembles somewhat a slightly askew jaguar face. The height of this stela is 76 inches, the greatest width 36 inches, and the average thickness 12 inches.

ALTAR 1

The zoomorphic altar (pl. 59, *b*) in front of Stela 1 represents a crouching animal, evidently a jaguar, although some elements of the face seem more like a serpent. The style of carving on this altar is quite reminiscent of that on the so-called "jaguar" stone yokes from Veracruz.

STELA 2

Stela 2 (pl. 49, *b*) contains a well-preserved carving, only the upper part of the stela having suffered mutilation, which had probably been the usual much conventionalized "mask panel." The bottom element of the design seems to be a plumed serpent with short, arched body and a 4-plumed tail.

From the top of the serpent head, a gourd tree is growing. At either side of the tree are two figures in human form, reaching outward and upward. The upper portion of the main design panel consists of a "diving bird" with the familiar X-shaped glyph on either wing. If this design is inverted, it seems to represent a figure in human form, kneeling and wearing a bird costume with wings and bird-head helmet. Unlike Stelae 1 and 3, which accompany it, no altar was found in front of Stela 2. This stone is 71 inches high, 40 inches wide, and 18 inches in thickness.

STELA 3

The design on this monument (pl. 50, *a*) shows a figure in human form brandishing a curved club, while in front of him rises a large, upturned serpent's head. In front of the serpent, and filling the space in the lower left-hand corner, is another design element. The details of this unit are clear, but it is difficult to tell what is represented. It looks like an inverted head, wearing an ear disk, the body of which is a simple heavy scroll.

Above the open mouth of the large serpent head is another curious element which somewhat resembles a man in a canoe. Above the main design area is a horizontal band with a broad V-shaped element above it. In the fork of the V is a rectilineal U-shaped figure. The stela is 67 inches high, 43 inches wide, and 19 inches thick.

ALTAR 2

The altar (pl. 50, *a*) in front of Stela 3 is a round-eyed, wide-mouthed, fairly realistic frog. It is 58 inches long, 51 inches wide, and approximately 18 inches thick.

STELA 4

The design on Stela 4 (pl. 51, *a*) represents a standing figure with curiously attenuated feet rather widely separated, standing on a basal panel of tasteful geometric design. Around his knees and ankles he wears knotted bands or garters. His left arm is upraised and holds something, possibly a curved club similar to that represented on Stela 3. He holds some other object in front of him by the other hand. On his head is an animal or bird helmet. Behind the figure, apparently

attached to an X-shaped glyph, are four large curving plumelike objects—possibly an elaborate bustle.

Above the standing figure is a "diving bird" closely similar to that on Stela 2. This figure too, when inverted, seems to represent a kneeling human figure in bird costume. Above this is a conventional "mask panel" the upper portion of which is the same as that on Stela 3. This stela is 90 inches high, 33 inches wide, and 24 inches thick.

STELA 5

This curious stela (pl. 52) is the largest and most ambitious in composition of any at Izapa. In the intricate design which covers its broad surface in low relief, 10 figures in human form can be detected, as well as several birds and fish. The central feature of the design is a growing tree with eight branches spreading out at the top, and with the roots extending into a horizontal rectangular panel near the base. The panel on the left side is decorated with a series of triangles and on the right by a single horizontal line. Below this panel is a scroll design, evidently representing water, which carries across the base of the design and part way up the right-hand side. Seated on the rectangular panel in which the roots are growing, are six figures, three on each side of the tree. On the left-hand side, a pair are seated facing each other with a small altar or fire between them. A third figure seems to be in attendance behind the outside figure of this pair. The latter seems to be an old man wearing a gnomelike pointed cap and a circular ear plug. Just behind and above his head is a grotesque face or mask, quite Maya-like in style. On the right-hand side of the tree trunk is another similar seated pair, with some object between them. The right-hand figure of this pair sits with his right arm extended straight ahead, while in the hand of the slightly flexed left arm he holds something like a stylus. Behind him another person appears to be grasping the handle of a parasollike object.

The two principal figures stand facing each other with the tree between, one just above each of the two seated pairs just described. The one on the right seems to represent a fat individual wearing a bead necklace and a large elaborate headdress terminating in a serpent's head. Just behind him stands a smaller figure dressed in a skirt and with a high plain headdress. Along the upper margin of each side of the design area are the two upper elements of the U-shaped two-headed serpent or monster, as in Stelae 11 and 12. The heads are elaborately modeled with bared fangs and scrolls on top, and they face inward. The one on the right has a series of tassels depending from a circular ornament at the back of the head.

The large figure standing on the left of the tree is puzzling, as the upper part of his body seems to terminate in a complicated maze.

The figure may, however, be wearing a beaklike mask. A pair of hummingbirds, with carved beaks probing into the eye of the two-headed monster, stand one on the shoulder and one on top of the head. Hanging head down from the upper left-hand corner of the design are two fish, while in relatively the same position on the right-hand side is a large bird like a pelican, apparently roosting on the scroll forming the headdress of the two-headed monster on that side. On the branches of the tree are leaves and fruit, and possibly other birds are intended.

Framing the main design above are two horizontal panels with geometric designs representing the jaguar "mask panel."

ALTAR 3

This circular altar (pl. 59, *a*) has carved on it in low relief the figure of a long-tailed bird with outstretched wings, probably the same as represented on Stelae 2 and 4.

The bird is represented as roosting on or diving from a rectangular panel. The greatest diameter of the stone is 60 inches. It is 17 inches in thickness. From its position, this altar may have been associated with Stela 7.

MONUMENT 1

This carved stone (pl. 58, *b*) located near Group A may have been an altar. It is an irregular stone, roughly triangular in shape. At one corner is carved in low relief the figure of an animal with a long, curling tail, probably a jaguar. The carving is rather crude and the surface of the stone is rough, excepting for the body of the animal. This monument is about 40 inches in diameter.

STELA 6

The design on this stone (pl. 50, *b*) represents a sitting, potbellied jaguar. The head, which is turned directly upward, has a rather serpentine eye. Directly over the partly open, upturned mouth is a crescent-shaped object with a circle or large dot just above it. This is reminiscent of the figure similarly placed on Stela 3. The tail appears to terminate in an animal head. Behind the seated figure is a simple series of scrolls.

The stela is 63 inches high, 35 inches wide, and 21 inches thick.

ALTAR 4

The altar (pl. 50, *b*) in front of Stela 6, is a plain, flat, roughly rounded stone, 59 by 52 inches, and 11 inches thick.

STELA 7

This stela (pl. 51, *b*) at one time must have been one of the best carved at Izapa. Unfortunately, erosion, assisted no doubt by fires, has scaled off most of the carved surface so that only fragments of the design remain. In the lower right-hand corner is what appears to be an inverted serpent head with a crest of the type usually shown on monkeys. Attached to this is a carving which looks like intertwined serpent coils. The figure in the lower left-hand corner resembles the upturned head of a predatory bird.

This stela is 80 inches high, 51 inches wide, and 18 inches thick.

GROUP B

STELA 8

This stela (pl. 58, *a*), which has fallen on its back, face up, has suffered considerable weathering. The upper horizontal band evidently represents a simplified "mask panel." Below this is a large, raised cartouche with beveled edges. This was carved with a design now unrecognizable. Below this is a series of simple heavy scrolls, in the midst of which is a barely recognizable, small, standing figure. The stela is 80 inches high, 31 inches wide, and 16 inches thick.

ALTAR 5

Altar 5 (pl. 58, *a*), which accompanies Stela 8, is perfectly round, being 56 inches in diameter and 8 inches thick. The surface now uppermost is plain, but we did not have the opportunity of turning it to see if the under side is carved, as its carefully worked state suggests it might have been.

STELA 9

In its upright position, this massive stone (pl. 56, *a*) makes the most impressive appearance of any at Izapa. This is partly owing to its prominent position and partly to the fact that it is carved from a white stone. The upper part of the design in two broad horizontal bands represents the usual conventionalized jaguar "mask panel." Below this is a rectangular sunken panel with a design in low relief, which at first glance looks like an African elephant approaching head on. Although the details are not clear, it evidently represents a standing figure facing to the left, holding a curved stick in front of him. Apparently three long feather plumes depend on either side. The figure with its stiff slender legs may represent a bird deity or a warrior in bird costume.

The stela is 83 inches high, 60 inches wide, and 18 inches in thickness.

ALTAR 6

The altar (pl. 56, *a*) accompanying Stela 9 is a heavy, flat stone, roughly rounded. There are 2 or 3 circular depressions on the surface, like small mortar holes. The altar is broken into two pieces, which still remain in position, and is 96 by 92 inches in dimension, and 19 inches thick.

STELA 10

The upper part of the design (pl. 56, *b*) consists of the conventionalized "mask panel." On the lower left-hand side of the main design area is a vertical column which may represent a tree trunk. Leaning against this in a seated position is a nude human figure. Two smaller standing figures to the right face the seated figure. Filling the space between these figures and the mask panel is a series of heavy scrolls similar in style to those on Stela 8.

The stela is 69 inches high, 38 inches wide, and 13 inches thick.

ALTAR 7

The altar accompanying Stela 10 is a round, flat stone, 51 by 47 inches, and 11 inches thick.

There are two other small, thick, circular altars near Stela 10.

STELA 11

This stela (pl. 53, *a*), which had fallen face downward, was raised with considerable difficulty. The upper part of the design represents the conventionalized "mask panel." Rising on either side at the bottom of the design are the two heads of the double-headed monster or serpent. Between these is the stylized, seated figure of the fat jaguar with body in full face, upraised head in profile. This is evidently the same being represented somewhat more realistically on Stela 6. The figure between this and the mask panel is rather badly eroded. It looks as if it might represent a head in profile, facing to the left, with outstretched arms, and two scrolls rising from each shoulder.

This stela is 72 inches high, 38 inches wide at the base, and 15 inches thick. No altar was found in association with it.

STELA 12

This large stela (pl. 54) is decorated with an unusually interesting design. The upper part consists of the horizontal panels comprising the "mask panel" unit. In the two upper corners of the main design area are the two heads, facing inward, of the double-headed serpent. Their bodies form a U-shaped panel which borders the central design. From the scroll-like head crests of the two serpent heads depend two ropes, from which hangs suspended the limp body of a dead jaguar,

with head hanging down and tongue protruding. The body of the jaguar is draped over a woven object which might represent a mat-covered altar. Below the jaguar are two seated figures in human form with some carved object between them. Each of the figures is reaching downward and grasping something like a rope.

The carvings, which appear to the right of the main design area, are evidently for the purpose of breaking the space formed by the wide bulge of the stela on that side.

Below the main design area is another panel design which may represent the lower jaw of the open mouth of the "jaguar monster."

ALTAR 8

The massive altar in front of Stela 12 measures 82 by 70 inches, and is approximately 18 inches thick.

MONUMENT 2

This interesting monument (pl. 53, *b*), which stands by itself in an open area between Groups B and C, is unique at the site. It faces to the south and represents an animal, probably a jaguar, with open mouth, in which is carved in full relief, more than life-size, a seated human figure. The legs and arms of this figure have been broken off, and the head has either been worn smooth or it was intentionally left by the sculptor in unfinished form. The carving was done in such a manner that openings passed behind the head and under the knees of the seated figure. The lower lip of the animal is carved with simple geometric lines probably representing teeth, and the cheeks are covered with a series of curious ornaments. Although this monument was three-quarters buried before we excavated it, it was sufficiently striking in appearance to be the center of most of the local superstitions of the region. To the natives the stone is known as "El Leon," and it is supposed to be endowed with a guardian spirit which makes occasional forays at the mystic hour of midnight. The weird appearance of the monument is considerably augmented by the contrast between the light color of the protected human figure, and the black, weather-beaten surface of the animal head. This stela is 101 inches high, 67 inches wide, and 48 inches thick. The height of the human figure is 48 inches.

GROUP C

Group C is the northernmost monument group which we found at the site. The stelae and altars here are all plain, and are placed at the north and south edges of a broad low mound. Unlike other stelae at the site, they face toward the mound instead of away from it.

STELA 13

Like all of the stelae at this group, Stela 13 (pl. 60, *a*) is plain. The lower portion, which has been long buried, shows that originally the surface had been polished smooth. The stela is 58 inches high, 27 inches wide, and 22 inches thick.

ALTAR 9

Altar 9, in front of Stela 13, is squarish in shape, with rounded corners. It measures 50 inches across, and is 14 inches thick.

STELA 14

This rather squat massive stone (pl. 61, *a*) had a sunken rectangular panel carved on its front surface, but if this contained a carved design, it is now completely effaced. A broad rectangular shallow groove runs across the top. The monument is 60 inches high, 46 inches wide, and 35 inches thick. It now leans forward at a steep angle against its altar.

ALTAR 10

Altar 10, accompanying Stela 14, is roughly circular in form. It measures 52 inches by 42 inches, and is 18 inches thick.

STELA 15

Stela 15 (pl. 60, *c*), like its companions, is plain, but contains a beveled depression on its surface which has been carefully smoothed to conform with the rest of the surface. Stela 15 is 75 inches high, 46 inches wide, and 29 inches thick.

ALTAR 11

The altar accompanying Stela 15 is a roughly rounded slab of stone which, apart from smoothing, has not had its natural shape altered very much. It measures 56 by 75 inches.

STELA 16

This stela (pl. 60, *b*), being obviously plain, was not excavated completely. The portion projecting above the surface of the ground measures 60 inches in height, 47 inches in width, and 31 inches in thickness.

ALTAR 12

Altar 12, in front of Stela 16, is an irregularly rounded stone, measuring 55 by 41 inches, and is 17 inches thick.

ALTAR 13

This flat stone (pl. 61, *c*), irregular in outline, is presumably an altar, although at present no stela accompanies it. Carved on its surface is a shallow T-shaped depression with a groove or drain leading from it to a natural concavity at one end of the stone. It is 58 inches long and 46 inches wide.

STELA 17

Standing by itself at a distance of 200 yards from Group C in a northwesterly direction, the upper part of another stela projects above the surface of the ground (pl. 61, *b*). This was not excavated owing to lack of time.

GROUP D

STELA 18

Placed at the southeastern base of a rather large mound, and facing west, this is the only stela visible at this location. Although a large area of the upper part of the design (pl. 55, *a*) has been scaled off, the lower half is still in rather good condition. The upper part of the stela is decorated with a conventionalized mask panel.

Seated on each side at the base and facing inward, are two human figures with a small stand or altar between them. This seems to be carved in the form of a stylized animal head. The faces are indistinct, but each is wearing a rather elaborate headdress in contrast to their almost nude bodies.

Seated behind the right-hand figure and carved on the side of the stela is a small male human figure (pl. 55, *b*) wearing a bead necklace and a circular ear ornament. He is represented with hands upraised together in front of his face, as though handling a canoe paddle. On his head is a crested helmet with an animal head projecting in front.

In a similar position on the opposite side of the stela is a similar male figure (pl. 55, *c*) also wearing a bead necklace, circular ear ornament, and crested helmet. Decorating the top of this helmet is a monkey head. The seated figure holds out his hands with palms upraised.

Below the main design is a horizontal rectangular panel, the simple design on which is largely obscured by the altar, which contacts it.

ALTAR 14

Altar 14 is placed in front of Stela 18. It is approximately circular in form and has four broad, shallow depressions worn into its surface.

ALTAR 15

This is a heavy slab of stone which has been rounded on top (pl. 61, *d*). It is located well up on the southeast shoulder of the mound, about 15 yards above Stela 18. This stone measures 83 inches in its greatest dimension and 71 inches in its smallest diameter. It is about 30 inches in thickness.

GROUP E

STELA 19

This stela (pl. 57, *a*), together with Stela 20, is placed in front of a small mound near the southern extremity of the site. Near this mound, and apparently associated with it, are a number of small boulder-faced, rectangular mounds. The two stelae are about 15 yards apart and face west. The style of decoration on these two monuments differs considerably from the others on the site. The design on Stela 19 appears to represent a highly conventionalized face, and is in a good state of preservation. The stela is 56 inches high, 24 inches wide, and 15 inches thick.

ALTAR 16

The altar in front of Stela 19 is carved with remarkable realism in the form of a crab (pl. 57, *a*). It is 49 inches wide, 33 inches long, and about 14 inches thick.

STELA 20

Stela 20 (pl. 57, *b*), like its companion, is carved in the form of a conventionalized face. Whereas Stela 19 has a horizontal panel of broad diagonal stripes across the top of the design, Stela 20 has an exactly similar panel at the bottom. The stela is 53 inches high, 28 inches wide, and 15 inches thick.

ALTAR 17

The altar in front of Stela 20 is circular in form, being 49 inches in diameter at its greatest width. It is about 10 inches thick.

GROUP F

About 1 mile north of the main site of Izapa is a detached mound group, just north of the road between Tuxtla Chico and Tapachula. The principal mound of this group, according to local superstition, is inhabited by a guardian spirit which shares honors with that of Monument 2. A number of the mounds of this group are faced

with boulders, and there are several rectangular boulder structures like the remains of walls or foundations. The general type of the mounds and the appearance of the two carved monuments seem to set this unit apart from the main site of Izapa.

MONUMENT 3

This is a stone 82 inches long and 32 inches wide, carved in the form of a serpent's head (pl. 60, *d*). A hollow opening runs through the mouth and continues into a troughlike tenon, which projects at the rear. The snakelike appearance of this head is much more striking than the photographs show.

MONUMENT 4

This is a long, slender column, rectangular in cross section. The base expands into a bulblike form, and the remainder tapers gradually toward the other end, where the simple decorative carving appears. It evidently represents a phallus. The length is 112 inches, it is 30 inches in thickness at the base, while the rectangular portion averages 18 inches (pl. 62, *a*, *b*).

CONCLUSION

Because of its size and location, Izapa is a particularly significant site. The art style of the stelae bears a close resemblance to that on Stela 1 at El Baul, Guatemala, and to the stelae recently discovered by Eric Thompson at San Isidro Piedra Parada in the same region. Since one of these, as well as Stela 1 at El Baul, contained an Initial Series date, it offers the possibility of cross-dating Izapa, or the more interesting possibility that further exploration at Izapa may reveal dates at this site. If the Baktun 7 dates from southern Guatemala should actually be contemporary dates in the same calendar as used by the Maya, the implication would be that Izapa is a very early site. Certain features would tend to bear this out. However, of fundamental importance in this respect will be a study of the ceramics. The paucity of sherds and figurine material encountered in the course of superficial digging at the site has already been commented upon. It is probable that the habitation level of the site is rather deeply buried. The few nondescript sherds seen were of little value in suggesting a time period. The two worn figurine fragments were of the solid variety, which hints at their being early. This scant evidence is, however, of little value.

In general Izapa appears to be much more closely related to the earth-mound sites of southern Veracruz and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, than it does with sites in the Maya area. The use of altars in front of stelae is a trait characteristic of some Maya sites. In

the Veracruz–Tehuantepec region, the only instance of a stela with altar encountered by us was stela C at Tres Zapotes.

In the light of present incomplete information, the stone art of the Izapa–San Isidro style seems related in some respects to the early stone art of the southeastern Mexican coastal area, and in other respects to early Maya art, yet it is sufficiently distinct to stand by itself. The designs are made to stand out in low relief, the background being cut away. The art itself is definitely impressionistic, complete realism being studiously avoided. Scrolls and curving lines are generously used, a feature resembling Maya art more closely than that of southeastern Mexico.

Sites with stelae decorated in the Veracruz–Tehuantepec style exist, among other places, in the vicinity of Tonala, Chiapas. Standing figures in profile are represented as wearing gorgets in the form of "Olmec"-like heads. In at least one instance, that of a stela which has been moved to the town of Tonala, a bar and dot numeral is represented. Much work remains to be done in this general area. In the light of present evidence, the general fact appears to stand out that there was an early spread of a stela cult extending from the southeastern Mexican coast across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to the Pacific coast region of southern Mexico, and possibly into Guatemala. The use of large earth mounds including long mounds placed in a rather unsystematic manner, and the general absence of stone masonry and architectural features, were characteristic. It seems probable that in part, at least, this development preceded the conspicuous growth of the classic Maya culture, which was to a considerable degree influenced by it. The use of bar and dot numerals is to be found in this area from coast to coast, including the use of the Initial Series in Veracruz and the Pacific slope of Guatemala. The carving of calendar dates or of bar and dot numerals on stone monuments was of relatively rare occurrence. There are two or probably three instances of Initial Series at Cerro de las Mesas, one at Tres Zapotes, one at Baul, and one at San Isidro. Bar and dot numerals of a different type likewise occur at Monte Albán and Tonala, sites characterized by the use of masonry. Their absence on stone monuments at other related sites does not necessarily indicate that they were not used on other media. At La Venta and Izapa numerals do not occur on any of the monuments as yet discovered. If the Initial Series occurring in this area represent contemporary dates, it would seem probable that the long-count calendar was used here prior to its adoption in the Maya area proper.

While a related early cultural spread is indicated for the area extending from southern Guatemala through Veracruz, it is not necessary to postulate that a single people or linguistic group is involved. As yet there is not much direct evidence to indicate the direction of this cul-

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tural flow. It is interesting to note that the culture is primarily one of the tropical lowlands. Present none-too-adequate archeological information suggests that the early related ceramic horizons were twofold in nature. One of these followed the coastal lowlands on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides, crossing by way of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, while the other followed the highlands from Guatemala to the Mexican mesa central. While the exact nature of these movements awaits a more complete study of the ceramic remains, the stone monuments offer many suggestions towards the solution of the problem, which is basic to an understanding of Middle American archeology.

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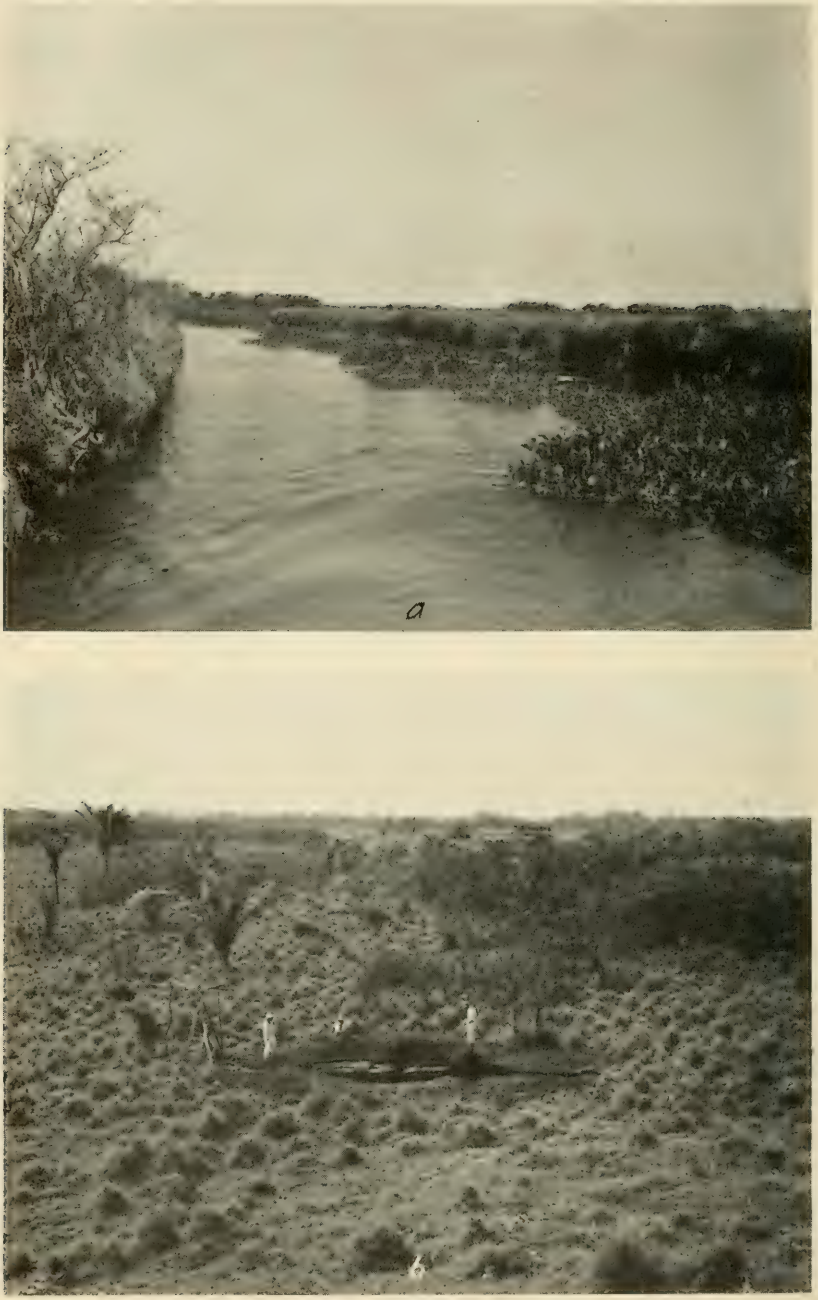
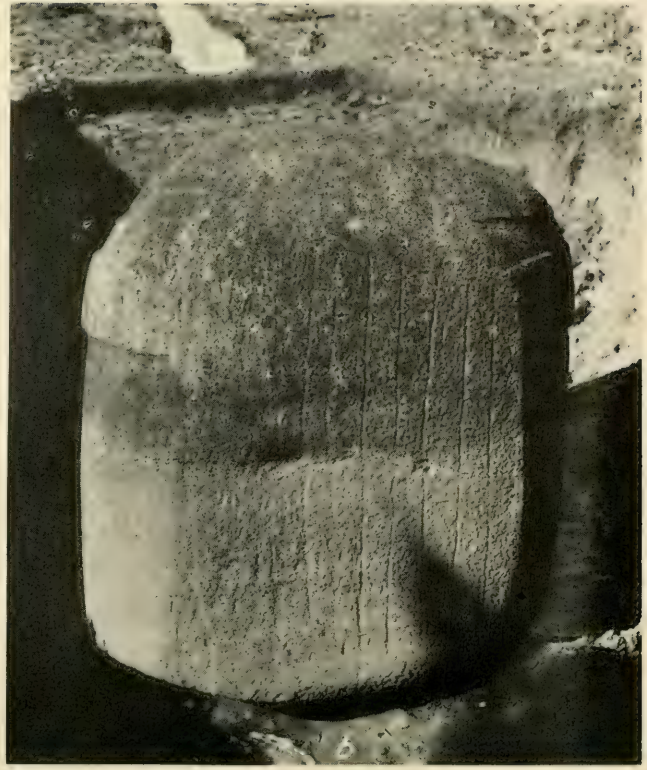
THE VILLAGE OF TRES ZAPOTES.



a, View showing typical slough in the Lower Papaloapan Basin. *b*, General view of Group 2, showing Stela A in the foreground. Left background shows the long mound. Tres Zapotes.

a, THE PRINCIPAL MOUND OF GROUP 2. THE LONG MOUND. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, THE COLOSSAL HEAD.

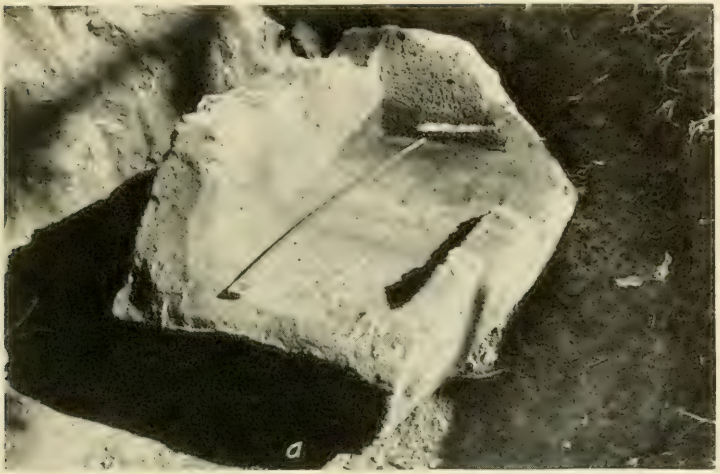


b, REAR VIEW OF THE COLOSSAL HEAD.

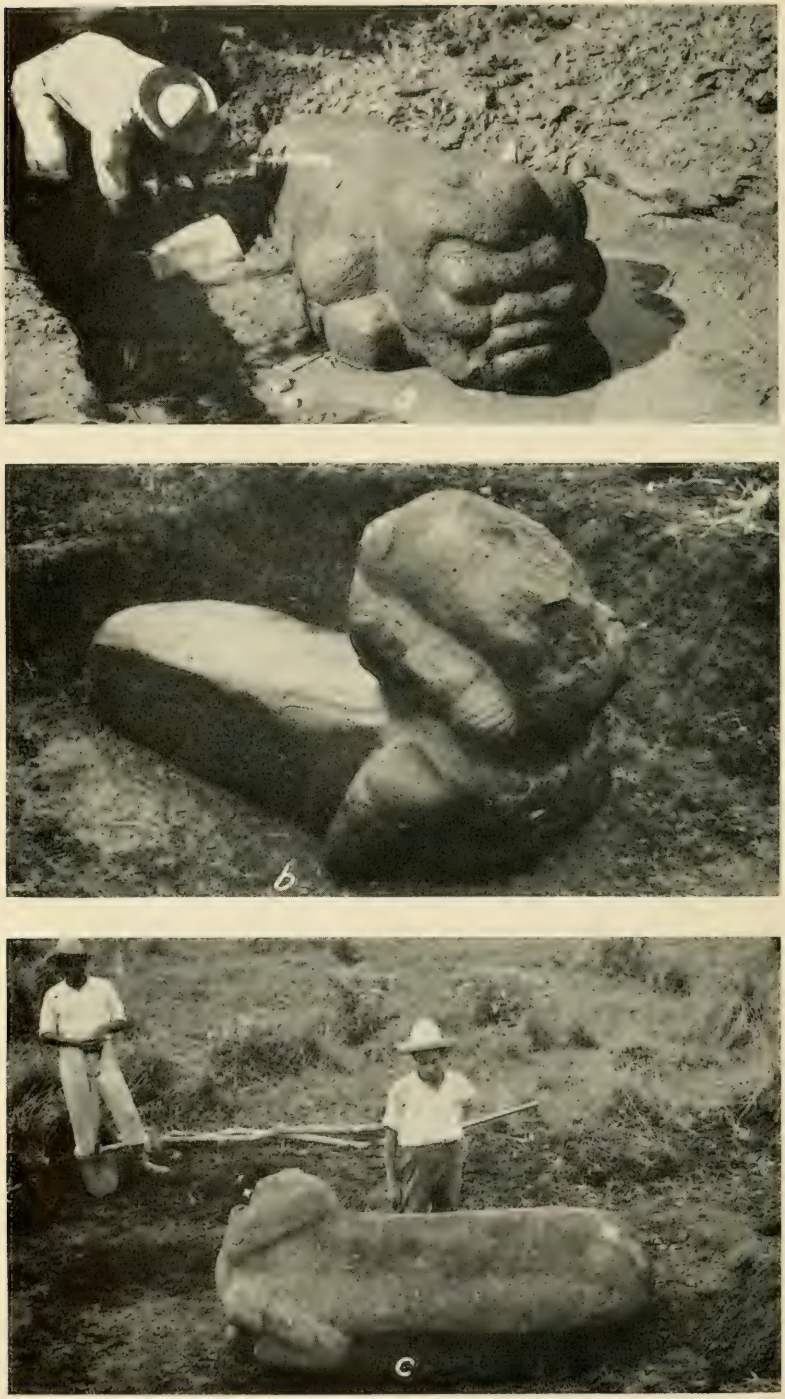
Tres Zapotes.

MONUMENT C, SIDE A: THE CARVED STONE BOX. TRES ZAPOTES.

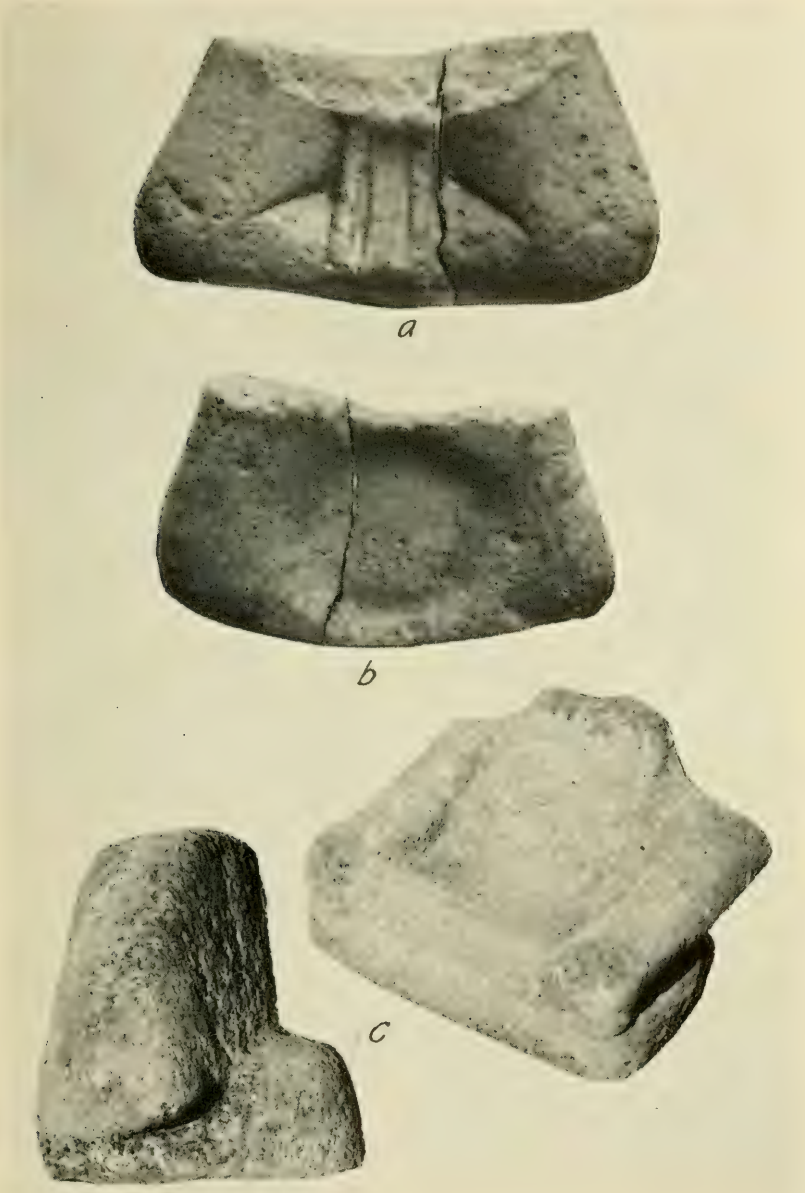
a, MONUMENT C, SIDE B. *b*, MONUMENT C, SIDE C. *c*, MONUMENT C, SIDE D. TRES ZAPOTES.



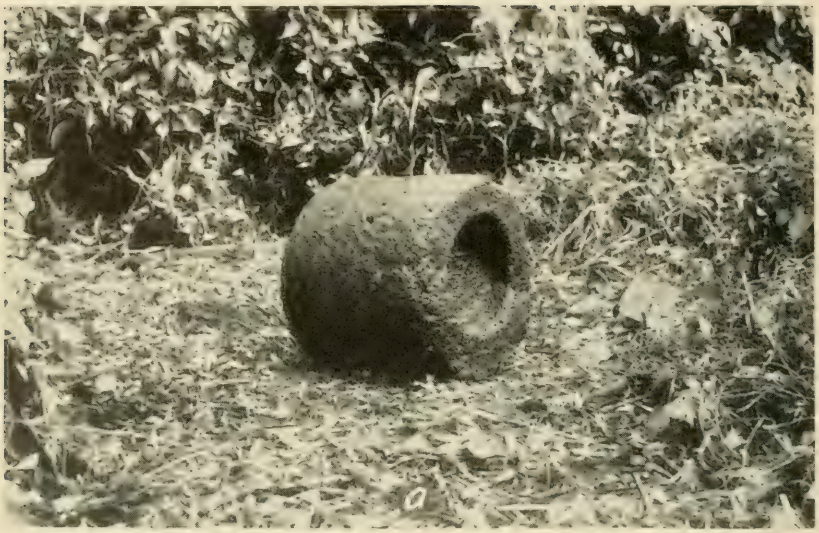
a, MONUMENT B, PLAIN STONE BOX. *b*, STELA B. *c*, STELA E.
TRES ZAPOTES.



a, MONUMENT F. *b*, MONUMENT G. *c*, UNDER SIDE OF MONUMENT G. TRES ZAPOTES.



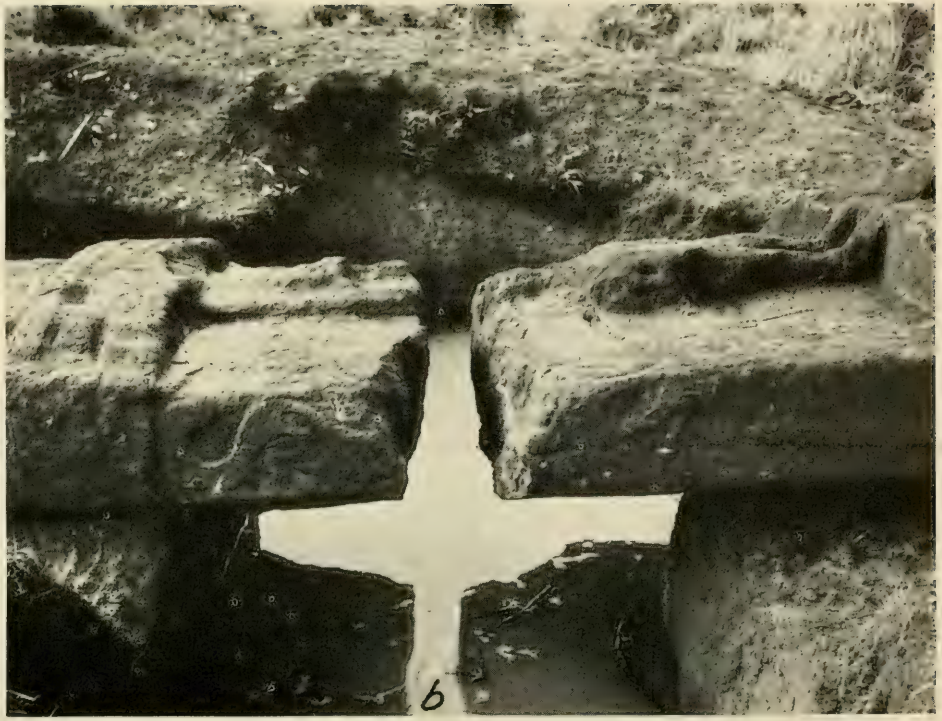
a, MONUMENT I, FRONT VIEW. *b*, MONUMENT I, REAR VIEW. *c*, MONUMENTS J AND K. TRES ZAPOTES.



a, MONUMENT N. *b*, MONUMENT D. *c*, MONUMENT H. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, MONUMENT L. *b*, MONUMENT M, FRONT VIEW. *c*, MONUMENT M, SIDE VIEW. *d*, MONUMENT M, REAR VIEW. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, STELA A. TRES ZAPOTES.



b, STELA A, SIDE VIEW. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, STONE ARM FROM LA PUENTE. *b*, STONE PLATFORM. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, STELA D, FRONT VIEW.

b, STELA D, SOUTH SIDE.

Tres Zapotes.

c, STELA D, NORTH SIDE.

a. CURVED STAIRWAY OF SANDSTONE FLAGS. *b*, STONE JAGUAR FROM TLAPACOYA. *c*, STONE COLUMN. *d*, STONE-LINED FIRE PIT. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, CARVED STELA OF COLUMNAR BASALT NEAR EL MESON. *b*, STONE WITH PETROGLYPHS, SAN JUAN RIVER. *c*, STONE HEAD FROM SAN MARCOS. *d*, JAGUAR INCISED ON STONE NEAR LIRIOS. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, Side A.

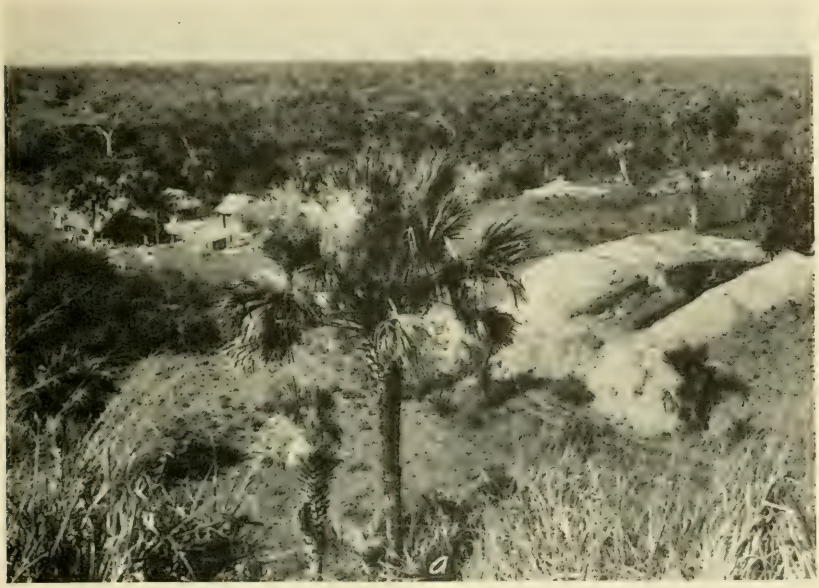
b, Side B.

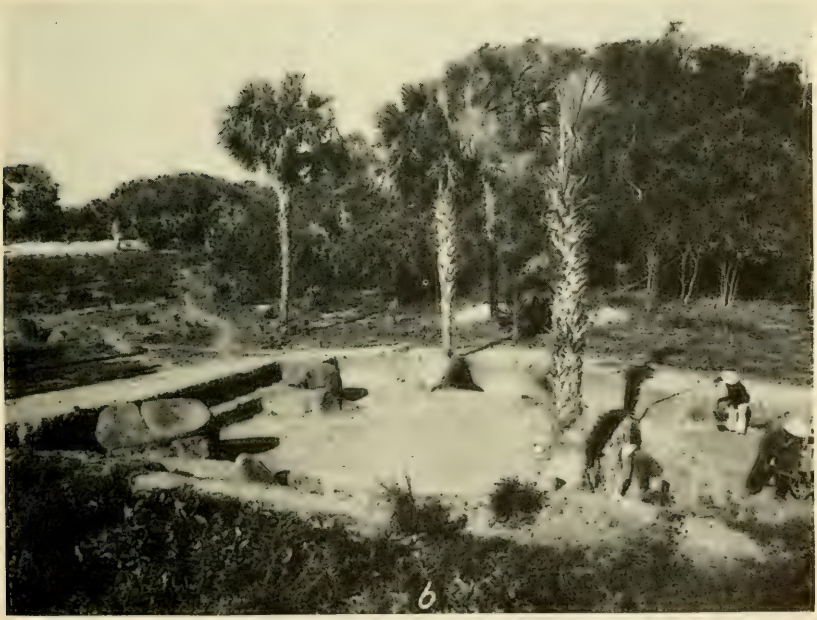
MONUMENT C. TRES ZAPOTES.

a, Side C.

b, Side D.

MONUMENT C. TRES ZAPOTES.

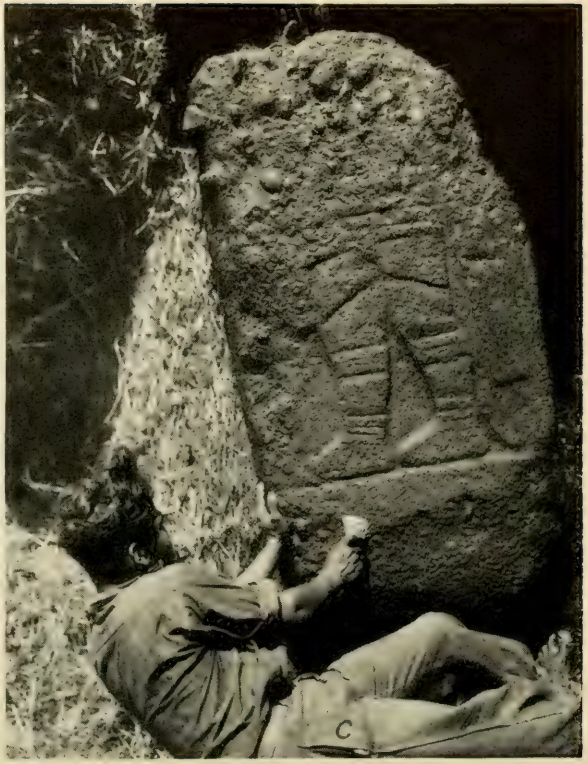




a, VIEW OF EXPEDITION CAMP AT CERRO DE LAS MESAS SITE. *b*, VIEW OF THE MONUMENT PLAZA AFTER EXCAVATION, CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

a, STELA 1.

b, STELA 2.



c, STELA 14.

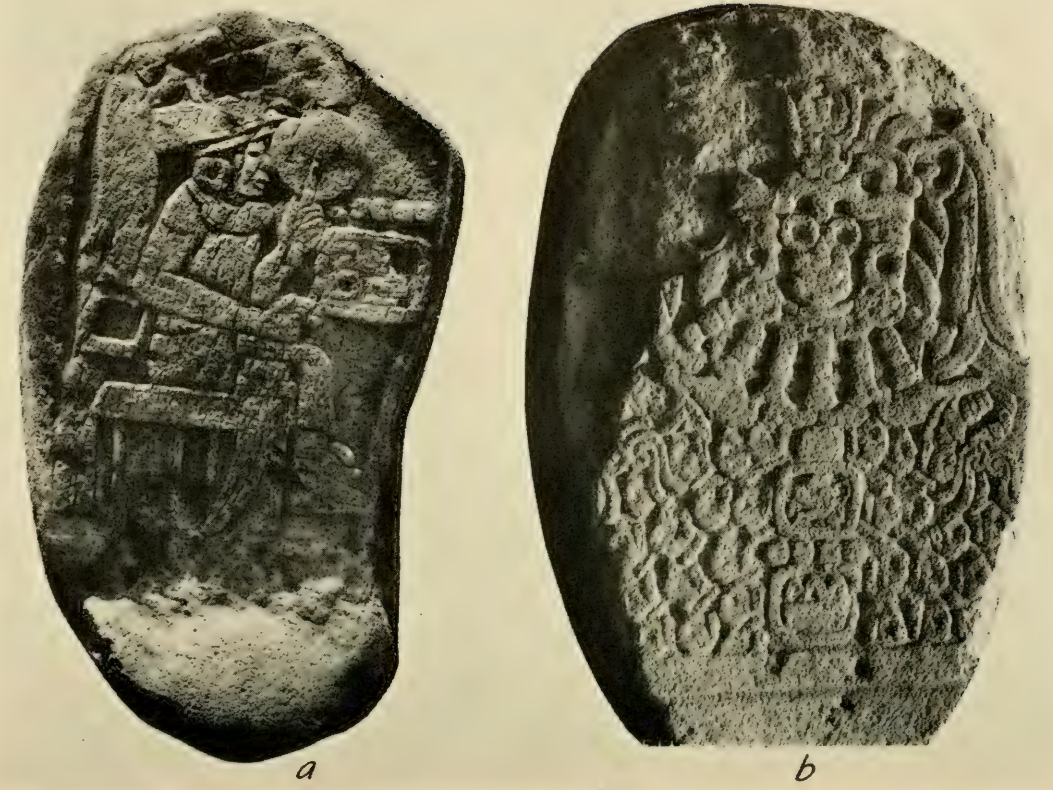
Cerro de las Mesas.

a. STELA 3.

b. STELA 4.

c, STELA 9.

Cerro de las Mesas.



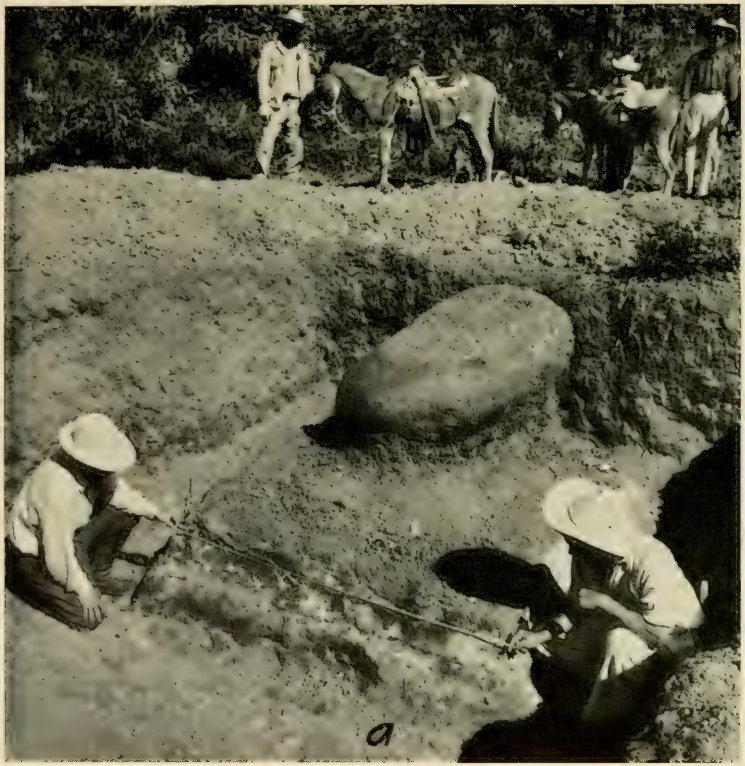
a, STELA 5. *b*, STELA 15. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

STELA 6. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

STELA 8. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

a. STELA 10. *b*. STELA 11. CERRO DE LAS MESAS

LEFT, MONUMENT 2; RIGHT, STELA 7. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.



a. STELA 13.

b, MONUMENT 2, BACK.

Cerro de las Mesas.

MONUMENT 5. TWO VIEWS. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

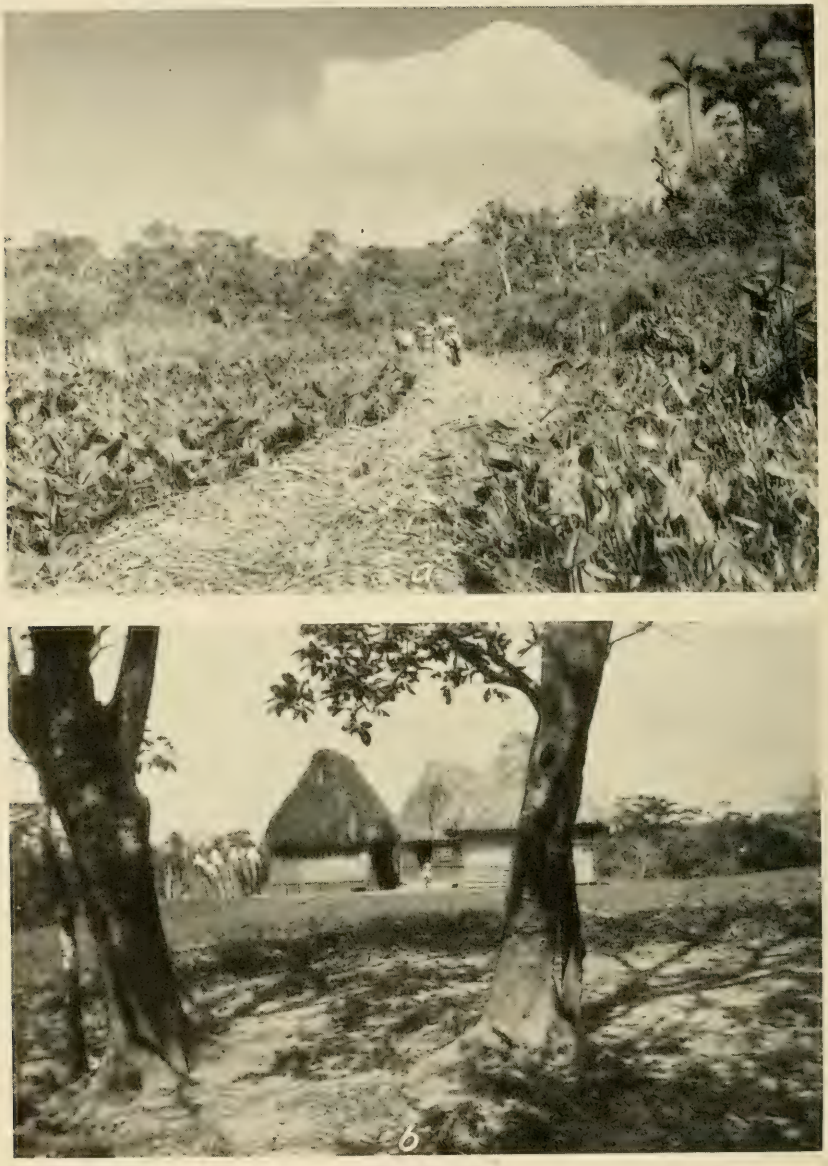
MONUMENT 1, TWO VIEWS. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

a, MONUMENT 7. *b*, MONUMENT 4. *c*, MONUMENT 8. *d*, MONUMENT 3. CERRO DE LAS MESAS.

a, MONUMENT 2.

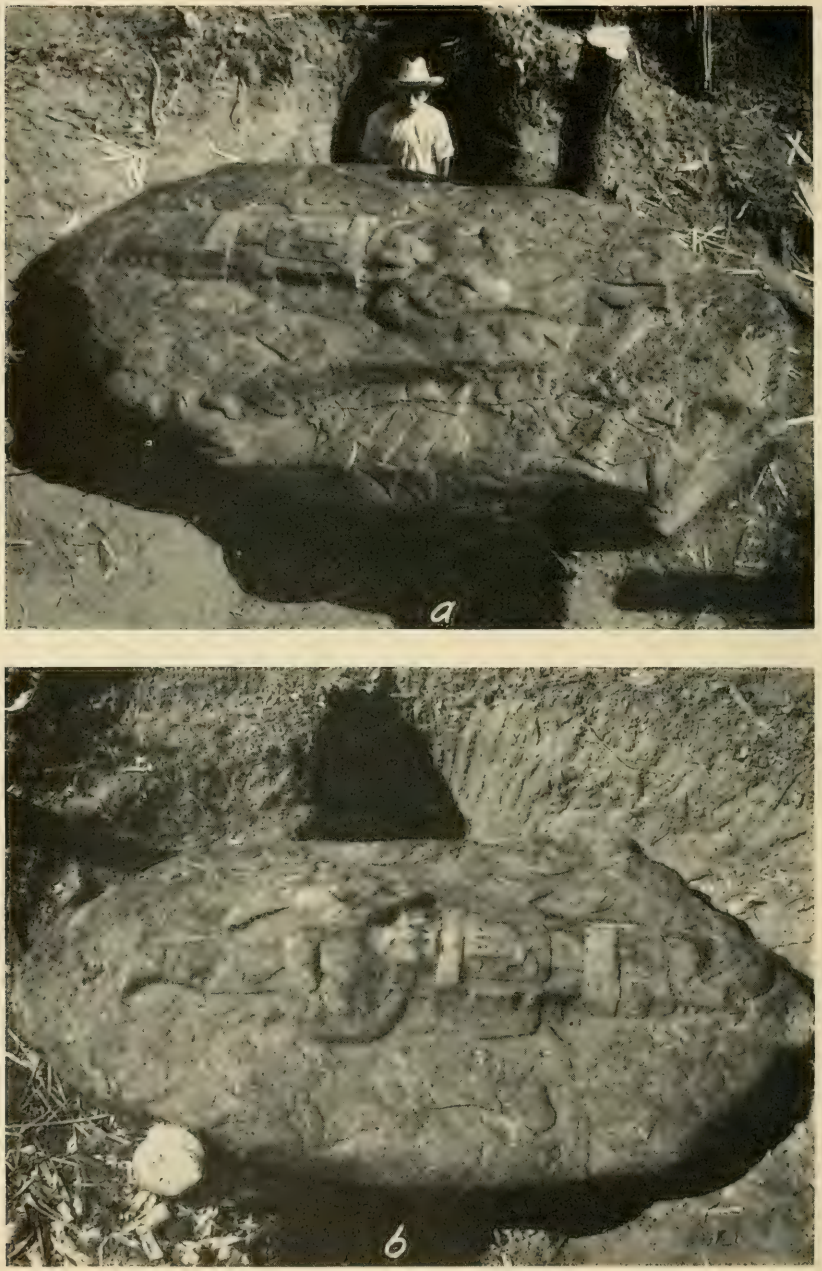
b, STELA 7.

Cerro de las Mesas.



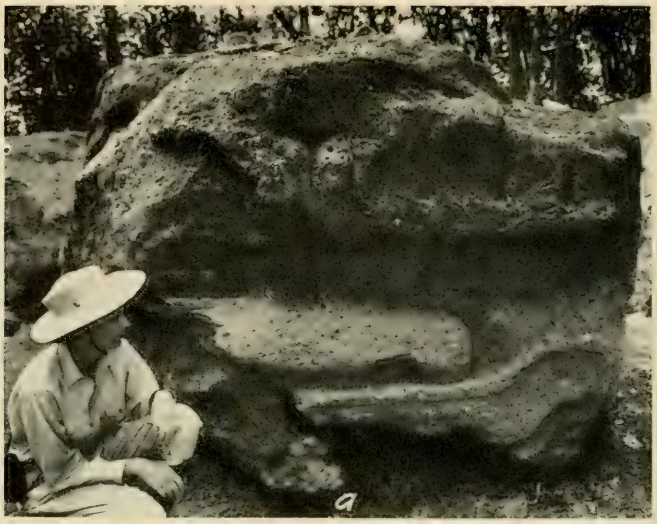
a. VIEW OF THE SWAMP BETWEEN LA VENTA AND THE BLASILLO RIVER.
b. THE VILLAGE OF LA VENTA.

a, STELA 1. *b*, STELA 5. *c*, STELA 4. *d*, STELA 4, SHOWING SCORINGS ON BASE. LA VENTA.

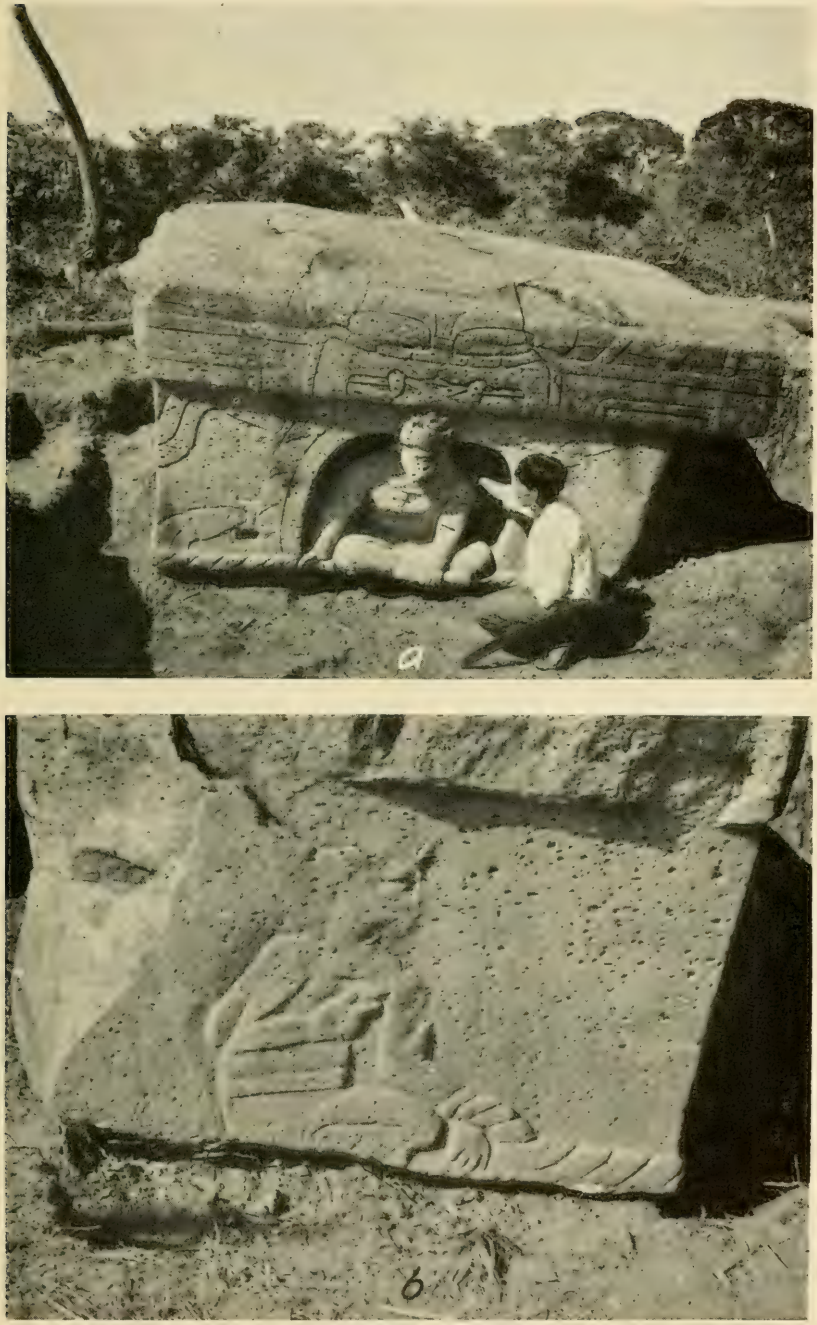


a, STELA 2, SOUTH SIDE. *b*, STELA 2, NORTH SIDE. LA VENTA.

STELA 3. LA VENTA.



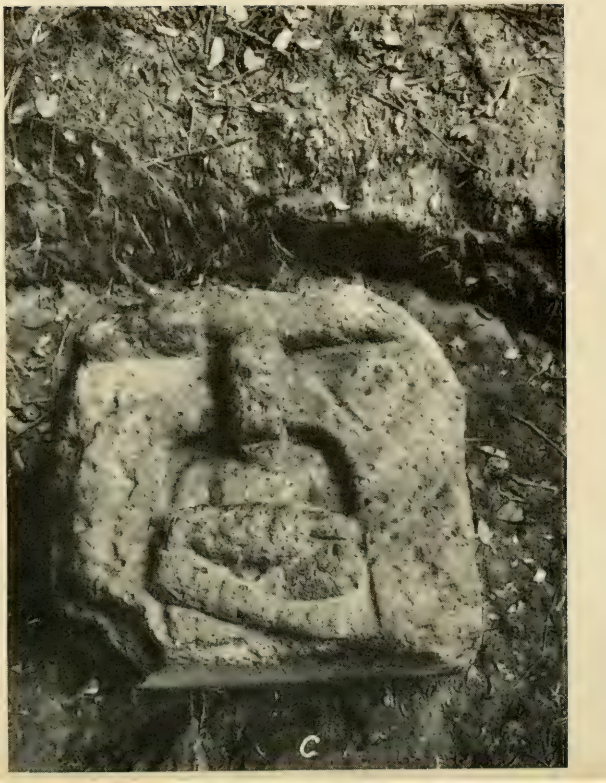
a, ALTAR 1, FRONT. *b*, ALTAR 1, NORTH SIDE. *c*, ALTAR 1, SOUTH SIDE. LA VENTA.

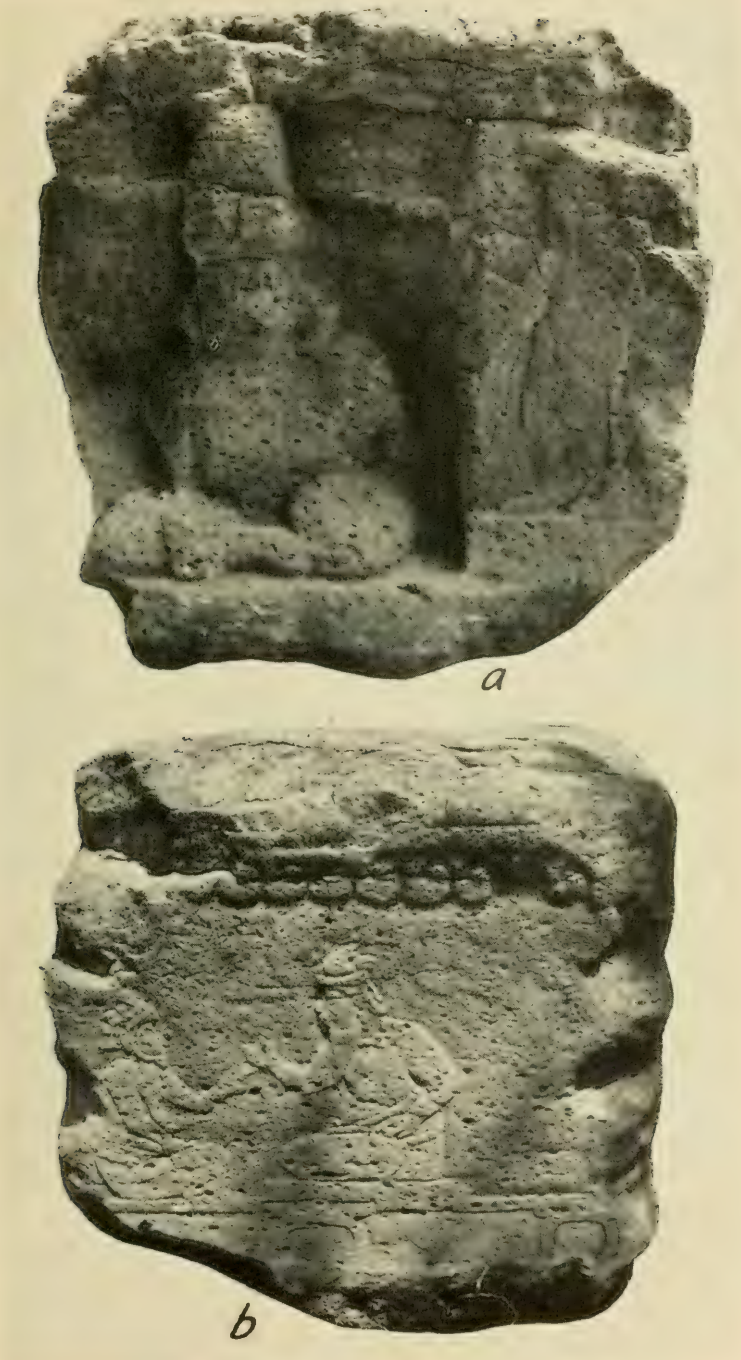


a, ALTAR 4, FRONT. *b*, ALTAR 4, SOUTH SIDE. LA VENTA.

a

b


c

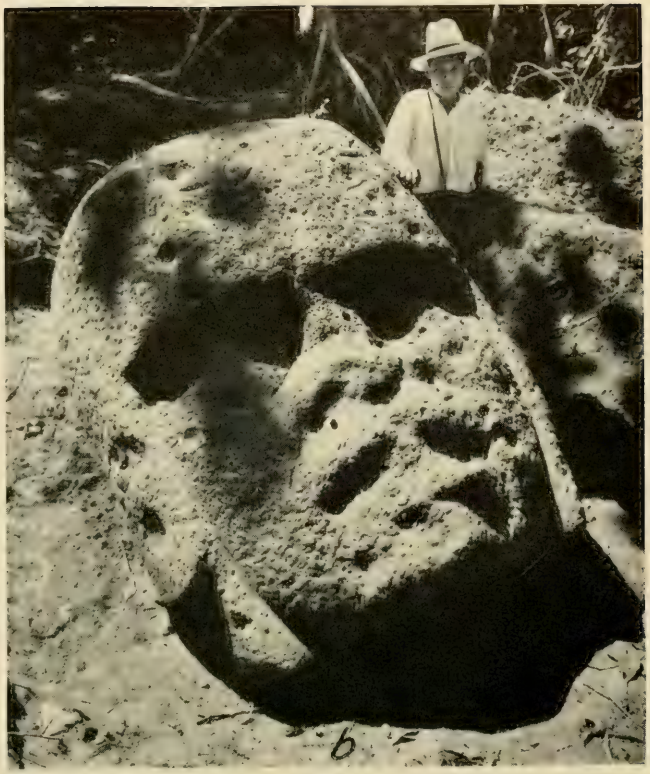


a, ALTAR 3, FRONT. *b*, ALTAR 3, WEST SIDE. LA VENTA.

ALTAR 5. FRONT. LA VENTA.

a, ALTAR 5, SOUTH END. *b*, ALTAR 5, NORTH END. LA VENTA.

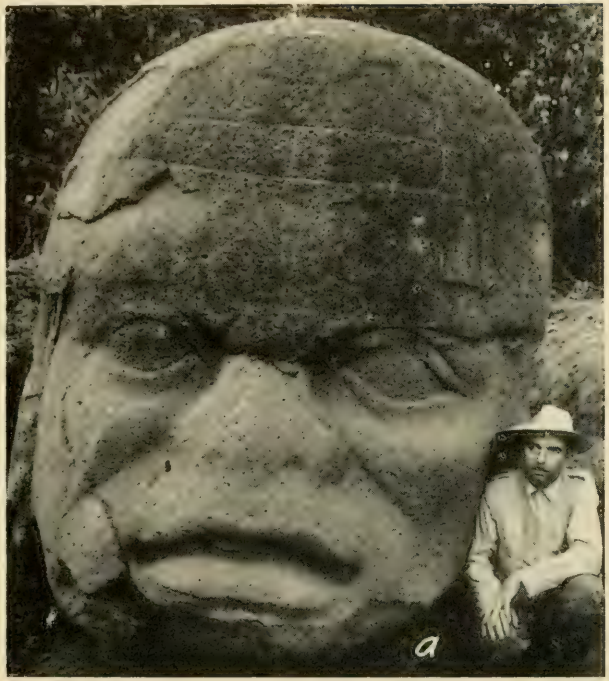
a, MONUMENT 1.



b, MONUMENT 3.

La Venta.

a, MONUMENT 2, SIDE. *b*, MONUMENT 2, FRONT. LA VENTA.



a, MONUMENT 4, FRONT.

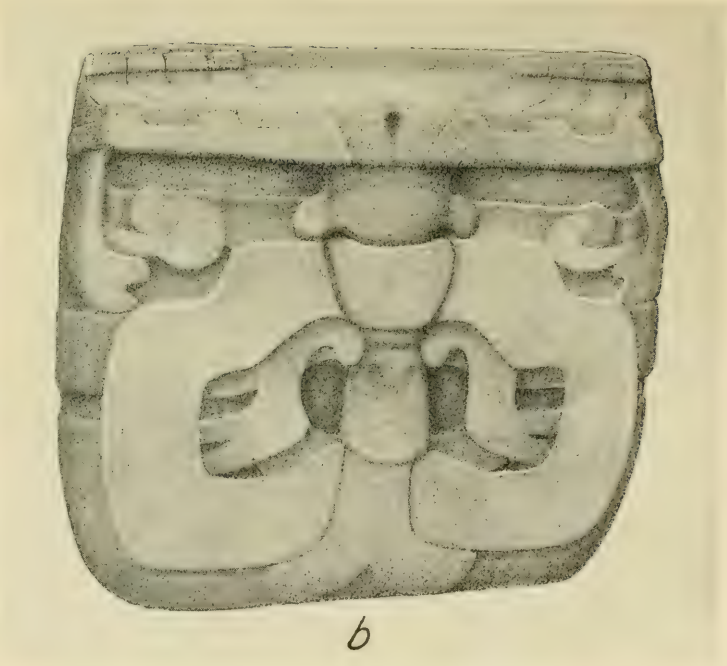
b, MONUMENT 4, BACK.

La Venta.

a, MONUMENT 5. *b*, STONE COLUMN AT BASE OF CERRO ENCANTADO. LA VENTA.

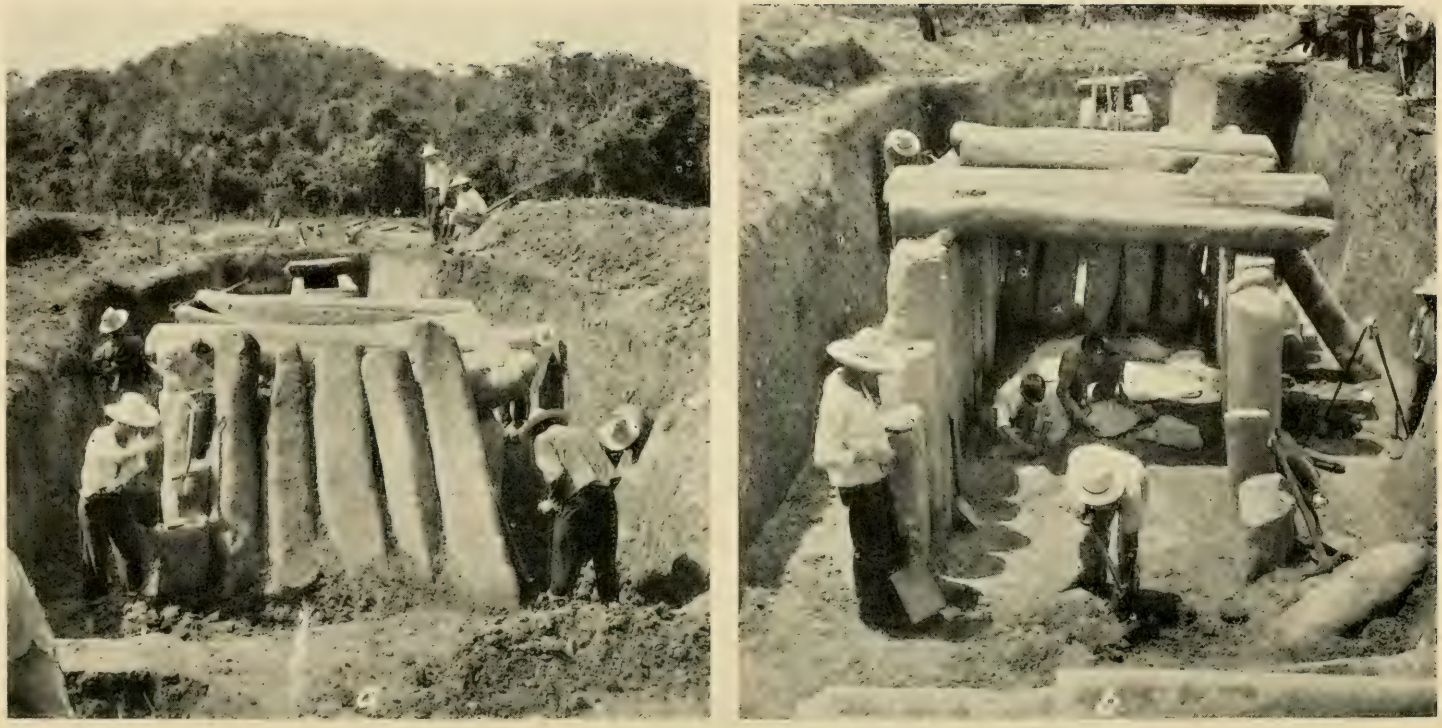
a, NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE STONE ENCLOSURE, PARTIALLY EXCAVATED. *b*, LARGE STONE COLUMN ON THE SOUTH END OF THE LONG MOUND. LA VENTA.

a. MONUMENT 6. THE STONE SARCOPHAGUS WITH PART OF THE LID REMOVED.



b. NORTH END OF MONUMENT 6; DESIGN RESTORED.

La Venta.



MONUMENT 7. *a*, STONE TOMB BEFORE REMOVAL OF THE COLUMNS CLOSING THE NORTH ENTRANCE. *b*, STONE TOMB AFTER EXCAVATION SHOWING LIMESTONE BURIAL PLATFORM IN THE REAR. LA VENTA.

a. STELA 1.

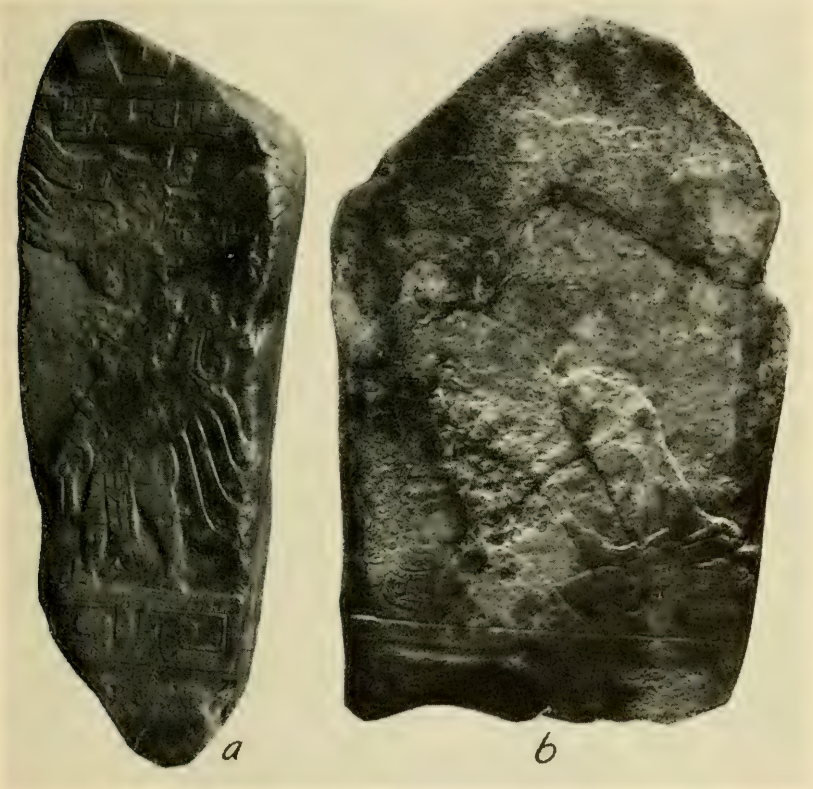
b. STELA 2.

Izapa.

a, STELA 3 AND ALTAR 2.

b, STELA 6 AND ALTAR 4.

Izapa.



a, STELA 4. *b*, STELA 7. IZAPA.

STELA 5. IZAPA.

a. STELA 11.

b. MONUMENT 2.

Izapa.

STELA 12. IZAPA.

a, STELA 18, FRONT.

b, STELA 18, NORTH SIDE.

c, STELA 18, SOUTH SIDE.

Izapa.

a, STELA 9 AND ALTAR 6.

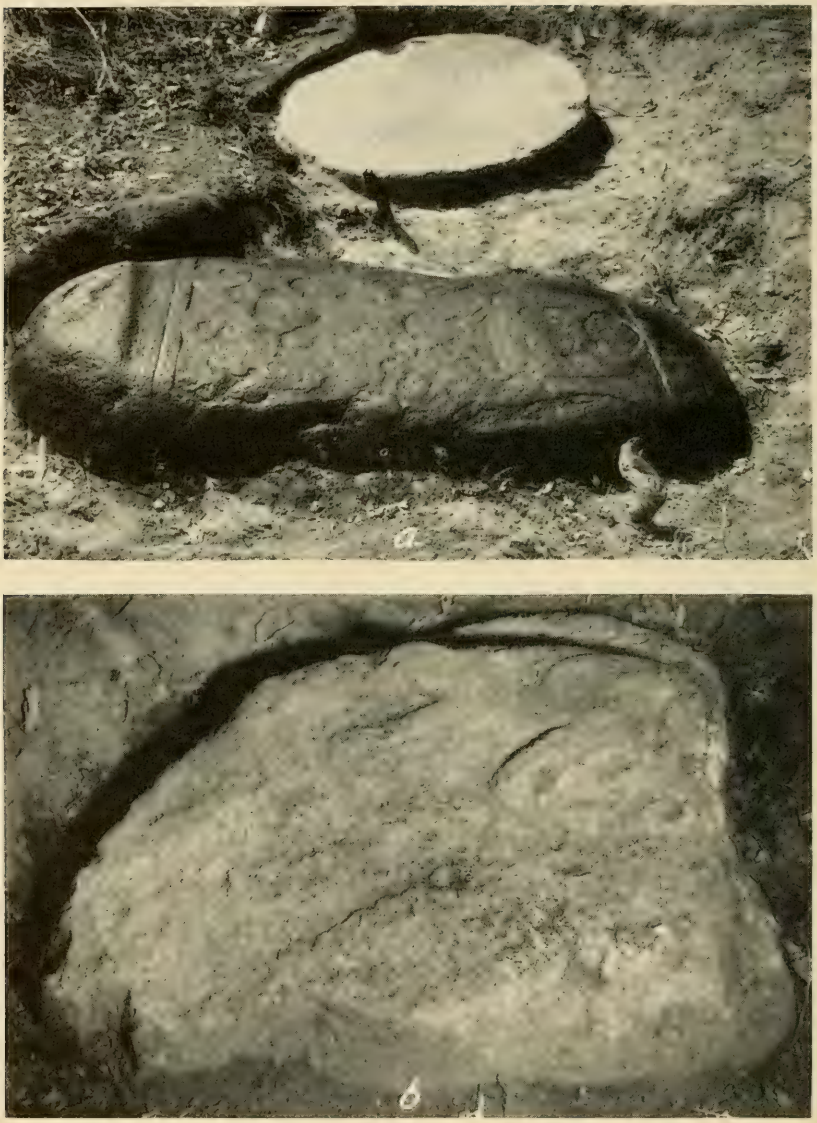
b, STELA 10.

Izapa.

a, STELA 19, ALTAR 16.

b, STELA 20, ALTAR 17.

Izapa.

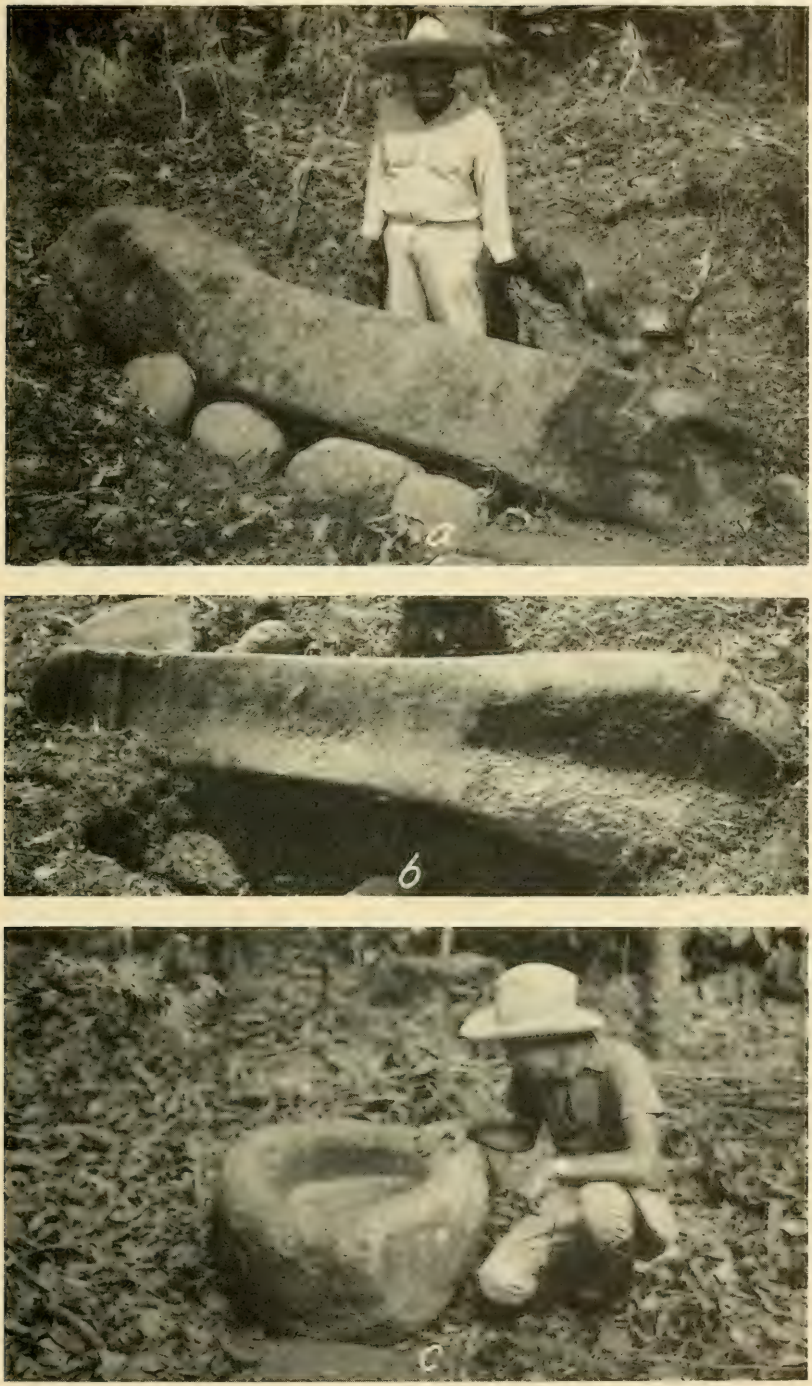


a, STELA 8, ALTAR 5. *b*, MONUMENT 1. IZAPA.

a, ALTAR 3. *b*, ALTAR 1. IZAPA.

a. STELA 13, ALTAR 9. *b*. STELA 16, ALTAR 12. *c*. STELA 15, ALTAR 11.
d. MONUMENT 3, IZAPA.

a, STELA 14, ALTAR 10. *b*, STELA 17. *c*, ALTAR 13. *d*, ALTAR 15. IZAPA.



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